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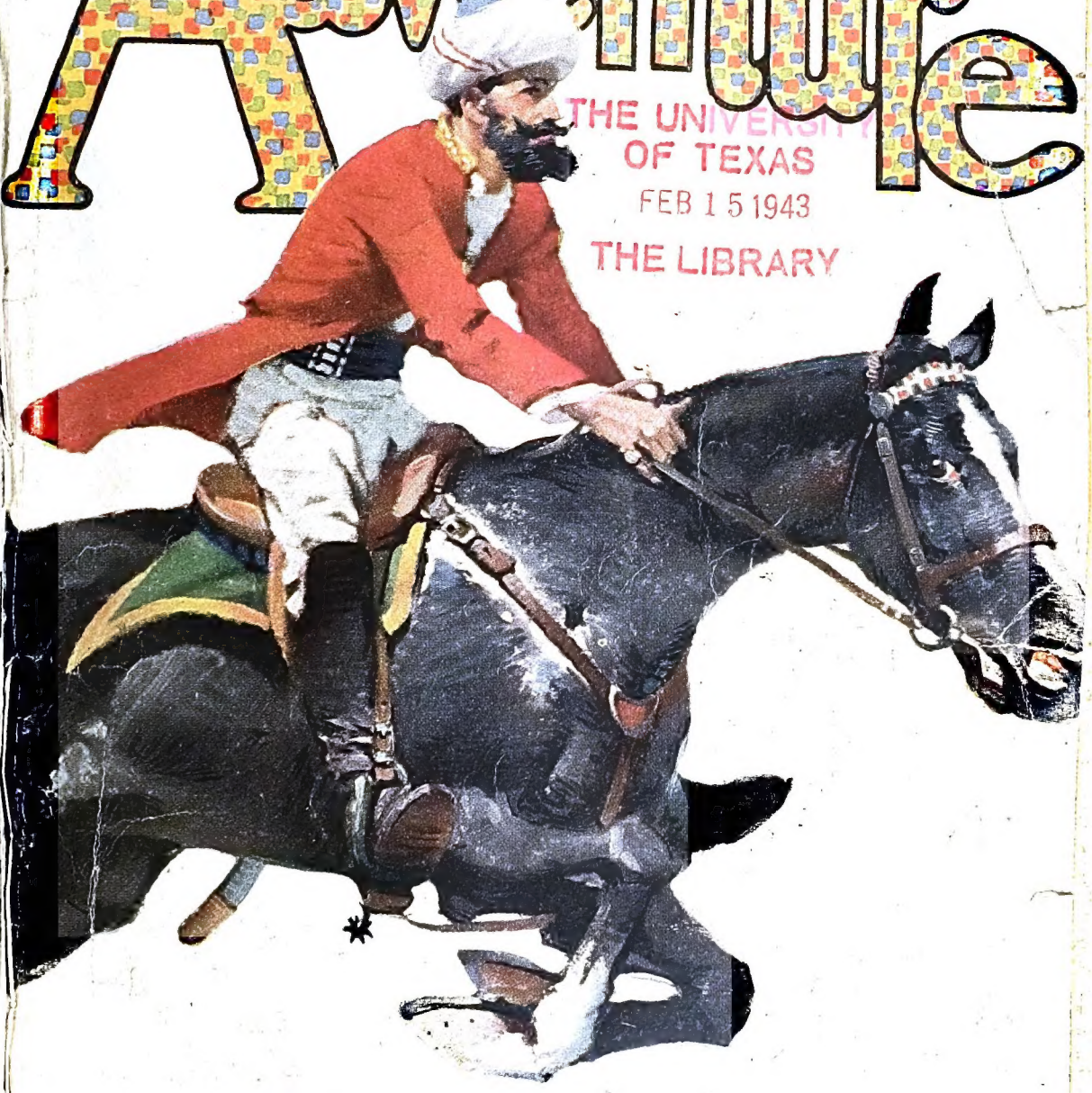

"HOOKUM HAI"

A TALE OF THE SEPOY REBELLION

BY TALBOT MUNDY

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...1913 Trade Mark Re...

Dear Bill:

Good-by, old man. I'm off for a little jaunt next month that'll make Ulysses look like a cliff-dweller. Harken to my route: California, Hong-Kong, Western Canada, Central Africa, England, Nicaragua, The Balkans, Manila, Holland, Italy, Arizona, Brooklyn, and a few other minor spots. Bill, if I were to enumerate my entire itinerary, it would sound like a Baedeker concordance.

Being aware of my deficiencies as a collector of the coin of the realm, you may wonder at my ability to thus disport myself in the above-mentioned several environs. Bill, I'll let you in on it. I'm going to spend several glorious hours in all these countries via the August Adventure. It contains a bully good yarn about every dog-gone country I've mentioned, and a fellow would have to have the imagination of a bluebottle not to feel himself transported as he reads 'em. Get aboard with me, Bill. 15c to cover the map with the August Adventure. Travel, with the bother left out. Don't miss it.

Your old pal

STEVE

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Vol. 6 ADVENTURE No. 3

Arthur Sullivant Hoffman Managing Editor

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AS APPLICATIONS come in for identification-cards they bring with them opinions that not only make clear the practical value of the cards in the eyes of those who know whereof they speak, but also make interesting reading. A few follow:

I think the identification-card idea is bully, and hope you will be able to work it out. I have often wished when out in some God-forsaken, lonely land that I had something of the kind, for I never carried a passport, and in a great many cases, had anything happened, my relatives and friends would never have known. LEDWARD RAWLINSON.

Your suggestion in the "Camp-Fire" is surely a mighty good one, and practical in every way to one of a "roving disposition." There are thousands like myself who have been "wanderers" but have had no adventures of a startling kind, but only the humdrum of every-day life; sometimes the purse has been plethoric with "mazuma," and other times "up against it good and hard." In a case of emergency one of those little identification-cards might be useful; perhaps it would not have to be used. God only knows. But anyhow, would you please to enroll my name? W. C. A.

I should think it would appeal to adventurers in general. It would appeal to me, I know, if I were on the road. (Unless I change my mind, I'm going to be on the road a bit this Winter—down on the border, for stuff to write; and I want one of your identification-cards when I go.) As to the idea I have for this card—You've *got to fasten it to you.* A man will lose his hat; also he will lose things out of his pocket. But a man seldom loses his belt. The thing is, then, to get something to withstand wear and perspiration. I believe aluminum will do it. Make the card of aluminum, thick enough not to bend easily, and *stamp* the inscription on it. The card as I see it should carry the identification business in at least four languages. One thing I will call your attention to, that I couldn't well represent in the drawings: The card should be curved, to fit the body. Aluminum is light, looks well—resembling silver—and I do not think it will tarnish readily. I think it a great idea (the identification idea) and I hope it will materialize. I have thought many times that adventurers ought to have *something to bind them together.* HAPSBURG LIEBE.

I am heartily in favor of it. I am quite sure that it will, in a great measure, do away with the number of unidentified dead Americans who are found all over the world. Most of us who drift with the tide, who don't care a tinker's dam what the morrow will bring, who chance anything where excitement is the only reward; most of us, though we are not afraid of death, would still like to have those related to us or interested in us know when we are dead that we are dead. Personally, I wear a gold ring and inside of it I have my full name and home address engraved. This is my only safeguard. In a few weeks, now, I shall start on a tour of the Orient, embracing the whole of Oceania, etc. At present I have no definite plan of the places I expect to visit. I like to drift without a rudder. It's so much more fun in the end. A. M. B.

An excellent idea, and to show how it appeals to me I may say that I have more than once decided to have my name and a Masonic emblem tattooed on me somewhere. Only my aversion to tattooing in general has prevented it. H. D. COUZENS.

The idea is a splendid one, and merits ready response from your people. . . . . Would prove of aid to wanderers and adventurers. . . . . English, German, French and Portuguese are the languages that will carry a man farther than any other combination. R. B. KIDD.

. . . . . All this as preface to my enthusiasm about your latest plan. I have been trying to figure a method out for having identification on my body without publishing my name and affairs to every little tripper who sees me. I had thought of a little tattooing on the soft under-side of the arm, where it would not ordinarily be noticed. But that has objections; it might be seen, on search or something of that sort. I can think of nothing better than your idea. I hereby apply for a card.
H. W. M.

On page 214 is another paragraph or two on these cards.
ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN.

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 31st day of March, 1913.

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(My commission expires March 30, 1915.)

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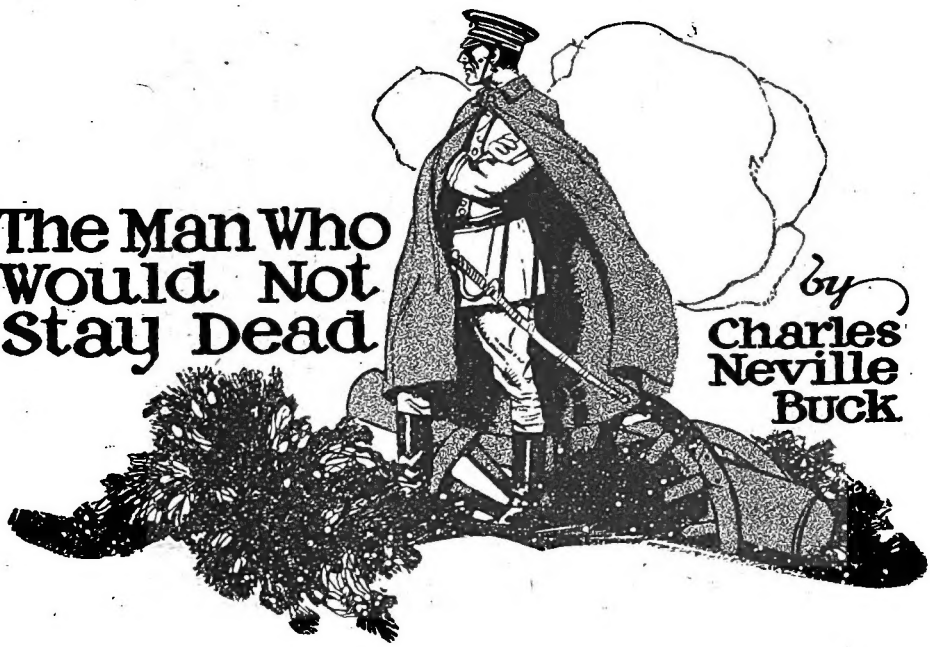

The Man Who Would Not Stay Dead

by Charles Neville Buck

THE six prisoners of war were making the best of it. The facts that their captivity was sugar-coated and beguiled with many polite lies, that no charge stood against them save that of a too great curiosity to know the truth—and tell it—and that their prison had the width and breadth of the city-walls—these failed to bring them contentment. They had come hurriedly across continents and seas to be in Constantinople when the soldiers of the Sultan went forth, and to accompany and observe the armies of Islam. Now, after a week of courteous leashing in the red-taped fetters of censorship, they sat on divans about hammered-brass tabourets in the Pera Palace Hotel, and clapped their hands to summon Arab waiters clad in white burnooses and red sashes. Also they cursed their inactivity.

The little Japanese officer of infantry, through whose eyes the Mikado had meant to look on, having kept his short but smartly booted legs outstretched like a European as long as he could endure such alien discomfort, covertly drew them up and tucked them under him, sitting on his feet. Secretly he yearned to discard his boots and squat on a mat.

"How says the Koran?" he inquired suavely, "'The fate of a man is about his neck.'"

"Yes," snorted Macy, who wore no uniform except the civilian mufti and pigskin puttees of the British war-correspondent, "and it was you Japanese who invented the Maxim Silencer for onlookers at the

NOTE—Some of you will at once recognize the facts, or world-wide rumors, upon which this story is based. They will be found set forth in the author's note that follows the tale.—A. S. H.

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front. As for me, I'm sick. I'm going to the front with or without the consent of the Sublime Porte."

"Once more at noon," contributed young Somerton, the infant of the group, who had come from New York, bearing the credentials of an important news-agency, "the Government promised that shortly, very shortly, the ban should be lifted, and we should join the forces of Nazim Pasha."

"As," snapped the special writer for the *Matin*, "the Government has assured us daily, and with unvaried falsity."

"However," objected an Austrian cavalryman thoughtfully, "fretting avails nothing. Without official sanction for going, we should be sent back."

Macy brought down his large hand on the table-top with a force that set the thimble-like coffee-cups rattling in their silver bases. From the *salle à manger* drifted the music of a Viennese orchestra, and the chatter of diners.

"Out there at the front," he growled savagely, "they are playing a game that may turn all the yellow spots on the geography-page red, and all the green spots blue. Four hundred and fifty years ago when Mohammed entered the Mosque of Santa Sophia, and chiseled the crosses from walls that Constantine erected to rival Solomon's temple, he struck down a looter with his own hand, giving utterance to this bit of prophecy: 'Who knows but in another age, another faith than Islam's may again worship here?' Perhaps that hour is coming, after almost half a thousand years. A new genius has arisen in this Bulgar, Savoff—and here we sit and listen to waltzes and sip coffee, and read lying bulletins of Ottoman victories."

The sixth member of the group had been silent. His uniform proclaimed him a Russian attaché.

"Savoff?" he repeated reflectively. "I wonder how much of it is Savoff's work?" The speaker paused, then went on. "This campaign has some features which betray the hand of genius behind the method of the allies. Savoff has been little known. He is a follower of French militarism, and so I seem to have heard, a great admirer of your late General MacKeltie." He turned and bowed to Macy, whose eyes for a moment lighted with something like hero-worship.

"As well he might be," he declared. "MacKeltie was the profoundest military genius of his time. Had he not died——"

"Ah," the Russian lifted his brows a shade skeptically; "there is the persistent rumor that, after all, he may not be dead. Sometimes a man may prefer the semblance of death to—well, to other things."

Macy frowned. His gaze engaged and held the eyes of the Russian with challenging directness.

"Let me assure you, monsieur, that in such stories there is no truth. I myself saw General MacKeltie—after his death. I must ask you to regard my statement as final."

The Russian smilingly bowed, and young Somerton, looking at his English colleague, felt that an ultimatum had been issued.

"I had been told," suggested the Russian, "that when General MacKeltie committed suicide, no one save the physician and coroner's deputy saw the remains. They might have been subsidized. I am glad to hear a conclusive statement from one who knows."

TO SOMERTON came a flash of memory. He recalled having heard some story to the effect that Macy had not first seen fighting as a correspondent, but that his education had begun in the uniform of Great Britain. There had been an intimation of some event in the past, which had ended in Macy's leaving the service, but it was all shadowy and vague. However that may have been, Macy had since made his name carry a reputation as a news-gatherer in that forum where the debate is military. He was the dean of the war-correspondents, and his dictum on current history carried conclusiveness.

The sun was close to its setting when the conclave of restless and forced idlers scattered at the door of the Pera Palace, and went their several ways. Somerton found himself falling into step with the Englishman, who walked in silence, sunk in thought. Their wandering carried them along the Pera Streets to the quays at the end of Galata Bridge. There swarmed the water-front cafés and the variegated crowding of small boats, and beyond loomed the picture across the Golden Horn, where Stamboul rose, a magic thing of minarets and domes and patchwork roofs, into an amber

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sky, blazing at its edge with traces of scarlet.

Young Somerton found in the scenes about this tongue of water, where two continents and two seas bring the types of the world to mingle and eddy in a vortex of color, living pages torn from the Arabian Nights. By morning, the green of the waters, the intense blue of the skies and the mosaic of red and yellow walls were as brilliant as a pageant. At night, the falling of a curtain of blackness that seemed to snuff out the life of over a million souls in one pall of murk was impressive. Just now, against the sunset sky, the pyramided domes and twin minarets of Yeni d'Jami rose at the bridge's far end like jeweled balls and splinters. Far to the left towered the walled enclosure of the Yildiz Kiosk.

"Suppose we stroll out where we can look off uninterruptedly across the Horn," suggested Macy. "I want to think. It's a time when I'd like to confide, except that the thing in my mind is not my own secret alone."

They turned from the quays, busy with the constant passing of troops from Asia Minor, and the lumbering of commissary-wagons, out on the bridge. The polyglot chatter of a dozen tongues rang in their ears. From a minaret on Yeni d'Jami came the mystically impressive call of the muezzin. Tarbooshed officers in a dozen varieties of uniform hurried by, their simitar-like swords jangling. Long-horned buffalo-teams plodded ahead of heavy carts. Smart carriages bearing veiled ladies of the harem, under guard of huge eunuchs, clattered into and out of traffic's press. A priest, with the green turban that testified a pilgrimage to Mecca, stated at the two men with disapproval. Across the darkening waters the cries of the loons and gulls were plaintive. Beyond, Stamboul was huddled with all its filth and fascination, with its bazaars and shouting and secrets, and now with camps in the streets and the gaunt and deadly specter of cholera beginning to stalk through its color and dirt and congestion.

At the center of the bridge, Macy stopped and spread his hands.

"Very interesting," he said, "were we not overdue elsewhere. We've already told the world all about the wounded coming in, and the reinforcements going out; about the cholera and the rest of it. We've duly notified the breakfast-munching public that the city is lethargic. Now, for my part, I'm done. To-morrow you will find me among the missing. I shall try to get to the Tchatalja lines."

Somerton stood with an elbow on the bridge-rail, and gazed at a victoria, from which a heavy face scowled out under its tasseled tarboosh, over a gold-braided frock coat. Two fat hands were clasped across a jeweled sword-hilt, and beside the carriage ran the native *kavasse*.

"I think I'll have a try at going with you," he said at last, but to that suggestion Macy decisively shook his head.

"No, you couldn't make it. This is your first campaign. You don't speak Arabic. You would be sent back. I'm a bit of a Turk myself at times. I have at least a fighting chance to lose myself in some command going forward. Just tell the crowd that I've disappeared."

The American accepted the verdict with another lapse into silence. Suddenly Macy's eyes glittered wrathfully, and he snapped out irrelevantly:

"Why, in God's name, can't gossip leave the dead in peace?"

"What do you mean?"

"I was thinking of that talk back there at the hotel. About MacKeltie. Why, if a man wants death badly enough to put a bullet through his heart, can't they let him be?"

"If," hazarded the young American quietly, "there's something you want to get off your chest, Macy; if, as you said a while ago, you feel the necessity of confiding, you can tell me as safely as you could whisper it into a tomb."

"There is something," snapped the Britisher shortly. "There's a story I'd like to tell. I don't know why precisely, and yet I do know that I'd like some one to know it, and to back me up in a certain lie I always tell convincingly."

Somerton laughed.

"It concerns this yarn which goes all over the place about MacKeltie's being alive," added Macy. "You hear it around every bally mess-table in the Near and Far East. I think, though I've no right to tell the story to you, that, if I did, you'd also deny it whenever you heard it. That's what I want you to do."

Somerton nodded. "State the case," he said briefly.

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"GENERAL MACKELTIE was a man," began Macy, abruptly plunging into his story, "whose soul contained the sheer essence of military genius. He had no advantages of birth or preferment, and started from the ground level of mediocrity. I, being the son of a gentleman, and a bally little prig of a subaltern, had started with a commission." The narrator broke off and smiled grimly.

"I mean to say, the fellow who was I at that time, and who is now dead, entered the service as a gentleman. Mind, I say nothing of the way he left it. This MacKeltie was the son of a middle-class draper who had enlisted with a regiment of Highlanders. Never mind what regiment; its name is non-essential, though immortal. Its bagpipes have often skirled it into battle where there was need of achieving the impossible, and its remnant has usually emerged with the impossible achieved. He was of their stripe. For distinguished service in the Afghan War of '79, he crossed the line between the common soldier and the officer. After that he rose leap by leap from achievement to achievement.

"When I first knew him, he was a major, with the D. S. O. The world remembers the Dongola expedition. I remember it, for I was there, and no one who was there is likely to forget. The field at Omdurman was a place of demoralization and holocaust, and when the Mahdists launched their savage assaults, wave upon wave of frantic fanaticism, it seemed hopeless to oppose them. Then came that old familiar summons of the bagpipes.

"The time for the impossible had arrived, and they had called on—MacKeltie. Into the shambles swept his command with the smart precision of the parade-ground. They were going out to sweep back the sea or be swallowed in it, and they went as blithely and jauntily as though the Queen were reviewing them. That command had traditions for reinforcements. The Mahdist tide broke under their smiting, and fell back in a shattered foam of defeat.

"It was shortly afterward that my trouble came—but that's another story. I left the service, and because MacKeltie had been good enough to notice one or two bits of work I'd done, he threw his influence into the balance to the end that I was permitted to leave by the gateway of resignation instead of court martial. I'll just say, in passing, that I wasn't on the carpet for cowardice. So much of defense may be allowed me. Years later, when the Boer War had turned from a matter of chastising a little people to an empire's disgrace, they had need of him in Africa, and there the draper's son, now a Major-General, again helped to stem the tide, and came home to triumph and knighthood.

"I saw him afterward in Paris. He was in civilian dress, and was riding unaccompanied along the road between the Bois de Boulogne and St. Cloud. I, too, was riding, though the other way, and when I passed him it seemed to me that his head sagged forward on his breast, and that he had become an old man. He did not see me, but I, shocked at his aged appearance, wheeled my horse and reined up at his side, saluting him. He raised eyes that were haggard and deeply distressed, and at once recognized me, although we had not met in years. He called me by the name which I no longer wore, and for a time we chatted about current affairs, but he talked with the manner of a man weary beyond expression, upon whose soul lay some unendurable shadow.

"I had come only that day to Paris from a long sea-voyage, and was completely out of touch with current news and events. I did not know that reports of ugly scandal had reared their heads to assail the General, and that he, too, was facing such an investigation as that from which he had once saved me—but far more serious. Had I known how he stood charged, I would have scorned to believe any story that smirched his name. No matter what these accusations were. They were personal, and they were such things as would mortally hurt a soldier standing on so high and gallant a pedestal that his fall would shake the Army. As we rode together, he talked frankly, as to a friend, admitting how desperately he was hurt.

" 'I can face some things,' he said simply enough. 'But an enemy in this guise is one against whose assaults I have no defense. They do not need to prove me guilty. To have made such an accusation is enough to damn me.'

"I cursed his slanderers bitterly, but he only shook his head, and kept snapping his thumb against his bent forefinger—a characteristic trick of habit. As we drew near the Bois, he smiled very miserably and said, 'I have grown suddenly an old

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man. I think I shall hardly survive it."

"When we began to encounter that smart parade that rides and drives between the chestnuts of the Paris boulevards on a fine afternoon, I could see the effort with which he pulled himself together and sat rigidly and defiantly erect in his saddle. Where a month ago every head would have bowed and every pair of pretty eyes smiled in greeting to one of the world's great soldiers, he now rode between files of averted faces and studious neglect.

"It was only a day or two later that I picked up my copy of the *Matin*, to read the startling story of his death. He had died by his own hand in his hotel apartments. I went back to London, feeling that his detractors had murdered him, and witnessed the sable and mournful cortège of his funeral. The casket, borne on a gun-carriage, was draped with the colors he had so honorably served. Charges and scandals were buried with him, and the British people stood with bowed and uncovered heads. None, it was said, except his family and a coroner's deputy, had seen his face in death. There was no lying in state, no opening of the casket before burial.

"WHEN Japan struck the first blow at Russia, I was sent as usual to the front by my paper and, after being for a time held back in the same maddening captivity that we are enduring here, after attempting to cover a history-making war from the tea-gardens of Tokyo, I broke away and succeeded in seeing at least one big act of the drama.

"You know the history of that war: how in some respects it was like this. Swift and crippling blows were struck before the enemy awoke to readiness. Plans matured in advance and incubated in secret were carried out with startling precision, while the world rubbed its eyes to the glare of a new sun—the sun of Nippon. Then it was that a leader arose among the soldiers of the Mikado of whom men seemed to know little. Though I had caught up with his army, I had not yet seen him. I had heard how physically he towered above the men of his regiments and the officers of his general staff. Some men said he was a Peruvian, some that he had inherited hatred of Russia from Polish parents. Some even intimated that he was of English birth, but it seemed from all these accounts that the standard he was advancing in swift and deadly rushes across the Manchurian field was not his own."

Macy paused and lighted a cigarette. The sunset was fading behind the domes and minarets. Port and starboard lights commenced to twinkle across the water.

"At the commencement of the battle of the Yalu," continued the Englishman, "the three Japanese divisions lay about Wiju, with the Imperial Guards at the center, the Twelfth on the right and the Second on the left. It was necessary to cross the Yalu under the guns of Makau, and the Twelfth was boldly thrown forward a day in advance of the remainder of the army, to clear and hold the way for those that were to follow. A mock advance was made at Antung to distract the enemy's attention, while the Twelfth moved under cover eight miles up the river and built bridges at Sui-kau-chen.

"A week in advance the order was given, fixing the date and hour of the battle-proper for sunrise on the first of May. The maps in the possession of Major Fukuda of the Intelligence Department were ten-year-old relics of the Chinese War. At many points the river had changed its currents. Places marked fordable were now unfordable and swift. Boats and bridges had to be built. Even anchors had to be forged from scrap-iron. And yet at the precise moment named in the order, the Mikado's forces lay where they had been instructed to lie at that hour, in a crescent-shaped line of battle-front. There had been no slip, no failure. The Russian field-guns opened fire at ten-thirty on the morning of April thirtieth. The Japanese artillery gave tongue in answer, and all day the skies roared and smoked to the duel of the opposing heights—and all day between them the Twelfth built bridges. The timbered hill north of Chinlien-Cheng was shell-swept and shrapnel-torn until only stumps remained where there had been a cloak of tree-tops—yet, with the nicety of clockwork, the mind that was directing carried out each detail of the plan it had conceived.

"That day is now history, and it is not needful to describe the game played across its chess-board by successive moves. Yet you've got to see the picture to comprehend the achievement and the genius that won the day. Picture a broad island-dotted river racing with a yellow tide, and beyond

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it a broken country rising to the Manchurian hills. Picture Tiger Hill and Conical Hill, quiet in the chill morning, with the ominous silence of masked batteries. Behind the silence of that broken sky-line crouches the Czar's third army-corps, sullenly braced to turn the tide of 'monkey-men' that had swept it from Korea. Then picture an awakening of the furies—a rumble like the buried growlings of a distant volcano. Through the iron-lunged baying of the field-guns, and the barking of the howitzers, comes the minor spatter of musketry. The thin brown lines are creeping forward to the river shallows beyond the islands. The skies are no longer empty. Wreaths of smoke spiral up and the fleece of shrapnel floats with the morning mists.

"Zassolitch's guns are raking the brown lines that work forward breast-deep across the yellow water. The Japs are carrying forward their wounded as they go, except those who stumble under their wounds, and whose lives are quenched like candle-flames. The farther shore is gained under an unendurable fire. Annihilation threatens.

"Then comes a ringing order to charge. The brown lines brace themselves and shiver under the sting of the death-hail. That is for a moment only, then forward and upward they sweep with an irresistible rush.

"What a May Day celebration is this for Nippon! They break into little gaps here and there, only to close again and sweep forward, leaving tiny specks of human dust behind. Slowly the noises are sinking from crescendo to diminuendo. The field-pieces of the Czar are choking into the silence of despair. Doggedly, the Russian is giving way."

Macy had been speaking tensely, as though describing some scene upon which his eyes were actually looking. Now, he paused and went on again in his ordinary voice:

"THE battle of the Yalu was over, and I rode forward, bent on seeing the Commander, whose genius filled me with a sort of awe. Now, for the moment, there were no secrets to be jealously withheld from the observer. There was nothing for Japan to conceal. To-morrow would bring new plans and again official courtesy to the news-gatherer would be the polite silence of the Sphinx, but to-day, with the sun of Nippon at zenith, the world might look—and wonder.

"Through a field grimly torn and bleeding, I made my way to division-headquarters where the directing mind was planning, not only the next move, but the next half-dozen. His staff were about him. On a camp-table was spread a litter of maps and papers. He himself was pacing back and forth, listening to suggestions, which he accepted or rejected with a nod or shake of his head. He stood head and shoulders above his colleagues, and when I first saw him through the windows and shell-torn breaches in the walls of the old house he had occupied, his face was turned away. Among the orderlies who hurried to and fro I saw at a distance one who was not a Japanese, but who bore himself with that unmistakable something which proclaims the British non-com. I did not see his face. An aide told me, as I stood waiting where I had been halted at the door, that the General would grant me a moment or two, and shortly he himself came out to the area, so that we met out of sight and ear-shot of his staff. As he came forward—a tall, gaunt man—his head was still bowed, and his cap-vizor hid his face. Yet there was something familiar in his bearing, which was pre-eminently that of the soldier. His face was covered with the stubble of a beard several days old. His expression was unspeakably weary, and yet full of dominant energy. It was the saddest face into which I had ever looked, although the sun had set on his triumphant victory.

"But for the moment I realized these things only in a subconsciousness. As our eyes met, he, the great General, and I, the unknown correspondent, stood staring at each other as though each of us had seen an apparition. And so we had, for two dead men were looking into each other's living eyes. I had buried myself under a false name, and he was the man whose funeral cortège I had seen when muffled drums beat a dead march in the streets of London!

"He was changed. One who had not known him well would have failed to recognize him. I think it was a telepathic flash that revealed him to me rather than his face. He had been a heavy man with sandy hair and a ruddy complexion. Now he was thin to gauntness, and the broad shoulders that had once been bulky stretched in muscular thinness. His hair was black, under its dye, but the bristle of beard was white.

"As we stood there, both silent, the

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thumb of his right hand began to snap in and out against his bent forefinger with the old gesture that I knew.

"Forgetful that I was no longer an officer, serving with him under the flag that had been ours, I still stood transfixed and groping for words.

" 'You wished to see me?' he inquired in English, and I could only gasp back, 'You! I saw you buried.'

"His reply was low and guarded. 'Please remember that,' he said, 'and forget anything else that you may feel inclined to remember.'

" 'But,' I stammered, 'I don't—understand.'

" 'The man you knew was buried,' he went on quietly. 'It may be that something of him survives in me, but MacKeltie is dead.'

"I stood so stunned in my wonderment that his words came to me as from a great distance.

" 'If I took what seemed the surest way to prevent the uniform I wore from being dragged through scandalous attack, if I chose to die, I have paid the price.'

"Suddenly his voice lost its quiet and became tense.

" 'My God, man, the price hasn't been cheap! You have discovered my secret. What do you mean to do with it?'

" 'I should have known, sir,' I murmured, 'that this day's battle could only be your work.'

"Then I remembered that I had not answered his question.

" 'What will I do with it, sir?' I repeated. 'I remember a gallant commander who is *dead*.'

"He bowed his head and said 'Thank you,' then he stood looking absently off over the field.

" 'But, sir,' I enthusiastically blurted out, 'surely to-night you should feel triumph only. Your genius has blazed up in a watch-fire to the world. What matter the name under which you wear your honors?'

"He turned toward me with a bitter laugh.

" 'Do you think so?' he inquired. 'Can I forget that my tombstone bears a smirched name? Can I forget that I must wander the world a homeless ghost; derelict to honor; a truant from the grave? Is it my flag or my sovereign that I am serving?'

"When the war ended and the Mikado received the leaders of the army and navy in triumph at his court, only one illustrious name was missing from the roster of those in attendance. It was a name which had not often been heard before the war, which has not often been heard since, except in brilliant retrospect. Now and again about a mess-table the rumor rises that the hero of Omdurman still lives and wanders. It is my privilege to deny the story. He has the right to the sanctity of death. It is all that he asks of life."

"Henceforth it shall also be my privilege," Somerton assured him.

"To-morrow is another day," commented the Englishman, "and with it I shall be on my way to the Tchatalja lines."

A GROUP of beggars clothed in rags, shelterless refugees from the outlying villages, groveled at their feet, seizing the hems of their overcoats and kissing their knees as they pleaded piteously for bread, in the name of Allah. The two men shivered and made their way to their lodgings.

At noon of the next day Somerton, armed with a note-book on whose pages he was transcribing notes of the amazing demoralization and lethargy to be seen in the city, strolled through the twisting streets of Stamboul from Galata Bridge to the Mosque of Santa Sophia. Before the doors of the Calif's temple he met the Japanese infantryman and the Austrian cavalryman.

"Alone?" inquired the Mikado's representative. "I had thought that you and Mr. Macy had become inseparable."

"Macy's gone," replied Somerton shortly.

"To the front?" inquired the Austrian, and Somerton only shrugged his shoulders.

"Conceivably he may succeed," speculated the Austrian. "I half wish that I, too, had made the effort. There is no management. Look about you." He waved a disgusted hand at the congested throngs, through which sauntered cigarette-smoking officers and privates in a dozen variations of Ottoman uniform. "All deserters from the front, brazenly parading the streets and loafing in the coffee-houses. Have you read these bulletins?"

He pointed to a hand-sheet in Arabic conspicuously posted on a wall, over which two Moslem officers were indolently and satirically smiling.

"I can't read Turkish," Somerton confessed.

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"It is a proclamation that all officers and men in Constantinople who do not report to their regiments within forty-eight hours are to be court-martialed for desertion. In *forty-eight* hours, with the defenses driven back on Tchatalja—and they are laughing at it!"

"Look also at that!" The Japanese officer indicated jostling hordes of hungry and diseased refugees camped in the streets, their goats and sheep and buffalo-teams huddled with them, and their household-goods piled high on the pavements. They were being crowded into tram-cars for deportation to Asia Minor, but for every fifty that went a hundred arrived, bringing their cholera-stricken to swell the menace.

"That is the departure of the Turk from Europe!"

They went slowly through revolting scenes of suffering and back to Pera, where the European colony, reassured by a dozen foreign war-ships riding at anchor in the harbor, strolled and looked indifferently on. Again they settled down to their imprisonment, sending out emaciated despatches that contained little news, and that went to the wires from the hands of the censors emasculated even of that little. Daily the flood-tide of refugees and wounded swelled and overflowed the unsanitary byways of Stamboul, and daily the barracks and hospitals filled with an increase of plague victims. At times, from the hills beyond the crumbling casemates of the Byzantine walls, the observers could hear the far-away rumble of the guns at the front.

At last they read a four-line despatch in a belated Paris paper, announcing that St. John Macy had been captured with the storming of a Turkish outpost, and had been sent back to Sophia as a nominal prisoner of war. But of the details, which neither that despatch nor any other despatch gave, young Somerton was not informed until much later, when in Paris he met the Englishman, and had from his lips the full account.

THEY were sitting by a window of the Café Leperousse, overlooking the quay, while a sodden rain mixed with sleet beat down and pelted the asphalt and the waters of the river.

"It was as I suspected," said the British observer slowly. "Savoff and King Ferdinand and the rest of them deserve all the glory they won, but back of them and potential in all their counsels, from Philipopolis to Mustapha Pasha, from Mustapha Pasha to Lule Burgas and Tchorlu and Tchatalja, was another—and an alien."

"Who?" demanded Somerton. "Who was he?"

"He called himself Calazoff," said Macy slowly, "and he died the day of my capture. He had sustained wounds from a bursting shell. They had been working up at close quarters that day—even the staff. I learned that before the war commenced he was going from capital to capital in the Balkans and building up item by item the plan of campaign for the allied thrones. He was a wandering soldier of fortune, who proved a genius when the occasion arose. I was permitted to see his body, which was to be buried on the field."

Macy paused and poured a glass of claret with a hand that betrayed a slight tremor. Then he took up his recital again.

"A young Bulgarian surgeon was extremely kind to me. He conducted me after dark to that part of the field at the rear where squads were very busy turning up burial-trenches by lantern-light. In the red spots of the fires, tattered little details of the bigger picture showed as through holes ripped in a black curtain. At a distance passed a tall figure in Bulgarian uniform. It was the figure of an old soldier who, though his shoulders were carried smartly back, seemed somewhat broken.

" 'That,' the surgeon told me, 'is his orderly. He was always with General Calazoff.'

" 'I know that man,' I found myself saying as I hurried after him and overtook him. 'Sergeant MacTavish,' I announced, 'I am—or was—Captain Buchanan, late of the—the Highlanders!'

"Instantly the grizzled veteran wheeled and brought his hand to his forehead, his heels together.

" 'Albeit,' I shamefacedly confessed, 'I am now known as Mr. Macy, and there is no obligation to salute me!'

" 'You once wore the uniform, sir,' was his reply.

" 'I last saw you, MacTavish—do you remember where?' I asked him.

" 'It must have been in Egypt, sir?'

"I shook my head and watched his face as I informed him, 'It was at the battle of the Yalu, though you failed to recognize me.'

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"For a moment the old fellow stared, then he said in a low voice which indicated that he understood, 'In that case, sir, you know—about him?'

"I nodded.

" 'Yes, and I should like to see him.'

" 'You will keep the secret, sir? You served at Omdurman, sir?' The words came with a husky note of appeal, and he added with pride, 'I was color-sergeant, then, sir, if you remember.'

"He led me to a far part of the field, where a terrible toll of dead had been tallied. From a place where lay the bodies of a number of officers, he lifted a blanket and we bowed our bare heads as we gazed on the motionless features and eyes now closed forever and beyond doubt. On MacKeltie's lips was a smile of contentment."

Macy halted again for a moment, and his fingers tightened on the stem of his wine-glass.

"Old MacTavish stood there motionless for a while," Macy resumed, "then he began talking in a frightened, reverent whisper:

" 'He was delirious, sir, at the end. He fancied he was with the Highlanders, sir, and he spoke of hearin' the skirlin' of the bagpipes.' "

Macy drew out a handkerchief and mopped his forehead.

"He was buried on the field?" asked Somerton, after a silence.

Macy nodded. "It was his wish."

"No marked resting-place—no monument to commemorate the biggest things he has done," murmured the American slowly, but his companion, reaching across the table, clutched tightly at his wrist.

His voice came almost passionately.

"Have you ever been to Japan, young man?"

"No," admitted Somerton, perplexed.

"Go there. You will find a world-power where there was an Oriental archipelago. Go back to the Balkans ten years hence. Maybe you will find an empire there. I dare say they are monuments enough!"

AUTHOR'S NOTE—This story is, of course, fiction, but lest its improbability may seem to exceed the license of the story-teller, I wish to call attention to the rumor which suggested it—a rumor which, though unsubstantiated, has its believers in Europe and the Orient. I have heard it from a half-dozen entirely separate and disconnected sources; from civilians and from officers in the American and British armies. I have heard the suggestion made at mess-tables in Malta and Cairo, "Hector Macdonald is still alive," and always it has elicited animated argument for both affirmative and negative.

Sir Hector Macdonald, D.S.O., K.C.B., hero of the Dongola expedition and the Boer War and, according to many critics, one of the most brilliant military geniuses of his time, went from the ranks to his place, not only as a general officer, but a Major-General, aide-de-camp to Queen Victoria, and Governor of Ceylon. Then Europe was shocked to hear charges of personal scandal raised against him, and the newspapers heralded his suicide in a Paris hotel on March 25, 1903. Few persons saw the remains, and slowly the story grew that his death was not genuine.

When Kuroki emerged into world-prominence in the Russo-Japanese War, the question was asked, "Who is he?" It was said that he was not a Jap, and had come from nowhere. His origin was variously given as Peruvian, Polish and English, and it was said that after his brilliant achievements he disappeared as suddenly into private life and retirement as he had flashed out of it. There were those who said that Kuroki was only an *alias* for Macdonald and, while there is no proof for such a wild conjecture, the story has had a certain currency. It has also been said that Macdonald was later recognized in China, training the troops of the Chinese army. The author makes no effort to substantiate any of these stories, but has used what seemed a dramatic suggestion, from the world of unproven rumors, as material for fiction.—C. N. B.

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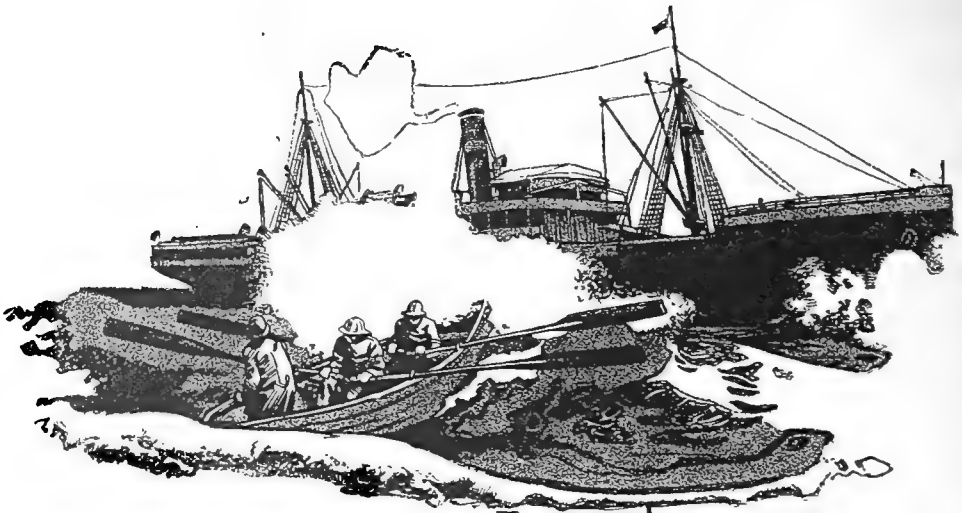

Loot and Laundry

A Yarn of the Deep Sea Trawlers

by Frederick William Wallace

JACK HENDERSON, deep-sea fisherman, and belonging to the Anchorville fishing schooner *Isabel Winslow*, was engaged in wordy altercation with Henrietta Murphy, washerwoman. The trawler, red-faced and indignant, was commenting freely on the condition of his laundry after having passed through the Celtic washlady's fair hands, and he produced certain pieces of his wearing-apparel to prove his assertions.

"Now, look at this shirt, Mrs. Murphy," he was saying. "Lord! it was white once, but with th' cussed blue ye've bin usin' it's all spotted like a blame' cusk! 'Sides that, ye've ripped every darn' button off'n it. Look at them there collars! Ye've got iron-rust on them an' th' blasted ink ye use for identification hez completely spiled them as collars. An' this singlet! Devil a button left an'——"

Mrs. Murphy placed her brawny arms under her apron and replied to the accusations with Hibernian vigor.

"I sp'iled yer ould rags, did I?" she shouted. "An' d'ye think it's a pleasure fur me t' be washin' them? Dirty fishermen's clothes reekin' o' gurry, bilge an' terbacker. Ugh! It makes me sick ivery time I hev them in th' tub——"

"I don't wear my white shirts an' collars a-fishin'," interrupted the other.

"It don't matter. They reek o' fish jest th' same," volleyed the lady of the tub. "It's in yer blood! Ye breathe it, eat it an' sweat it—an' iver since I was a child I c'd niver abear cod-liver ile! Take yer duds away out o' this! I niver want t' see them or you ag'in!"

Henderson collected the heap under his arm.

"All right!" he roared. "But this 'll be th' last ye'll iver git from any vessel what comes in this port. We've stood for it long enough, an' th' crowd is gittin' sick an' tired o' spendin' their lay-offs patchin' your rents an' skags an' sewin' on th' buttons ye rip off in yer wringin'-machine. An' ye don't even return th' buttons!"

Mrs. Murphy grasped a bar of soap.

"Out o' my house, you miserable fish-pedler! I don't want yer custom, nor yer

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fr'en's' either. I got all I kin do now wid dacent folks' washin', an' I ain't depindin' on a scaly gang o' cod-haulers fur a livin'! Get ye gone or I'll beat yer brains out wid a sthick o' yaller soap!"

And, putting her threat into action, she lunged from behind her tub and stove Henderson's best three-dollar derby with a shrewd blow.

"You infernal cat!" yelled the fisherman, hugging his laundry with one arm and trying to push the stove-in hat off his eyes with the other. "I'd like t' roll ye up in a tub o' trawl!"

Smack! smack! The soap descended with no light hand on the trawler's head and shoulders and he retreated from the Murphy domicile with hasty steps. Out in the street he turned for a parting shot at the belligerent washerwoman standing, arms akimbo, in the doorway.

"I'll queer you!" he yelled. "No more fishermen's laundry for you! No more——"

Mrs. Murphy gave a disdainful sniff and, turning, entered her house and slammed the door. A raw-boned rustic standing near, sniggered, and inquired flippantly:

"Tryin' t' do th' poor woman, Henderson? Why don't ye pay her what ye owe her? What's th' matter with yer hat?"

The trawler pushed the hat to the back of his head and glared at the questioner savagely.

"Do you want a poke in th' jaw?" he growled. "No? Waal, take a hitch aroun' yer tongue, my bully, or I'll put a stopper on it with my fist. See?"

The other saw, and Henderson lurched down the street with a miscellaneous collection of wearing-apparel under his arm and a lot of vituperative language on his mind.

He was laying down the law to an appreciative crowd in the *Isabel Winslow's* foc'sle when the skipper's voice rolled down the hatch.

"All up, below, an' git her down to th' end o' th' dock!"

And the incident closed for the nonce.

II

THEY swayed up, sheeted in and stood out the bay, bound for the Cape Shore and La Have. Off Anchorville Heads, the stays'l and balloon were hoisted, but they had hardly made a mile off the land before sea, sky and earth were blotted out in a steaming Fundy fog. And it was a fog! A drenching, impenetrable shroud of wet vapor which muffled all sight and sound, and played queer ventriloquial freaks with the horns and sirens of the vessels crawling through it. A fog which was destined to keep the engineman at Anchorville Head Lighthouse busy for fourteen days with the fog-alarm going every thirty seconds during that period!

Skipper Winslow heard the preliminary blasts with no satisfaction. Fisherman do not mind bad weather, but they hate fogs.

"Bring up your music-box," he growled to the man on watch. "Three blasts—we're runnin', an' keep your ears open an' your eyes skinned."

It was blowing a fresh breeze, and the schooner, with sheets started, was knocking off an easy ten knots—just a trifle too fast for a vessel in a fog, but Winslow was willing to take chances. The Cape Shore grounds were a hundred miles to the south'ard, and with such a nice breeze. Pah! A man wou d be a fool not to make use of it in making good southing. Besides his own lookout pumping the horn, the other vessels would have theirs too, and, like the bridge-player who takes a chance and trusts to his partner to help him out, Winslow kept his kites flying and trusted to luck and the other fellow.

There was a card-game going on down for'ard and, in the cabin, the after gang were regaling themselves with selections on the phonograph which all hands had recently subscribed for. The skipper paced the quarter, oilskins streaming with the vapor, and hummed accompaniments to the music floating up the companion.

"I was strolling along, simply roaming along,
Merely humming a song, thinking nothing was wrong,
Roaming here, roaming there, and I didn't much care,
For I didn't know where—I was strolling along!"

"Um!" grunted Winslow to himself. "That's a good tune." And he started to sing.

"Roaming here, roaming there, and I didn't much care,
For I didn't know——"

He stopped suddenly, while the phonograph continued the ditty.

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"Did you hear anything?" he inquired of the man at the wheel.

"Naw," replied the other. "How kin ye hear anythin' with that blame' machine squeakin' out all th' time?"

The lookout by the windlass was plying the horn but, as Winslow strained his ears, he fancied he heard the swish-swash of water and the pulsating of a steamer's engines.

"I was roaming along, thinking nothing was wrong——"

The phonograph droned on, and Winslow sprang from a quiescent, listening attitude into one of vociferous activity.

"Holy Jumpin' Sailor!" he roared. "There's a steamer astern of us!"

Zzzz-a-a-ah! A siren seemed to shriek overhead, and through the mist on the port quarter appeared the slate-colored stem of a large steamer. There was a roaring of whitewater under a salmon-and-rust-streaked wall of plates; a mud-streaked stockless anchor hung from a hawse-pipe; and, as Winslow sprang to the wheel, he noted subconsciously that the hissing bow-wave shut off the other vessel's draft-gage at fifteen feet. Knocking the man off the wheel-box, he whirled the wheel to starboard as the driving iron stem forged ahead.

THERE was a shout from the mist above. The fluke of the pendant anchor hooked into the *Isabel Winslow's* boom-foot-ropes as the big mainsail started to slat in the wind. Grinding and crashing, both vessels swept on, side by side.

"Let th' sheet go! Let th' sheet go!" yelled Winslow to the man standing dazed alongside of him.

The fisherman jumped at the command and, as the sea commenced pouring in over the quarter with the drag, he cast the main-sheet off from the bitt and let it run.

With a squealing of sheaves, the rope ran through the heavy double and triple blocks until the knot fetched up in the deck fair-lead. The boom, still entangled, swung outboard until it struck the port main-rigging. The vessel rolled down. The whole port quarter went under in a yeasty boiling which swirled around Winslow's shoulders as he clutched the spokes of the wheel. Then something snapped—it was the boom-foot-ropes.

Bumping and grinding along the steamer's hull, the schooner barely escaped the whirling slash of the propeller, which churned the water into foam a scant fathom away.

White-faced and panting Winslow stared at the receding stern under which revolved the racing screw and, speechless, hung to the wheel, while the gang came tumbling up from cabin and foc'sle.

"What an escape! What an escape!" gasped the skipper, when he found his voice. "Has he stopped?"

"Stopped?" It was Jimmy Thomas who spoke. "No, —— him! He won't stop. What in blazes do they care?"

Winslow crawled slowly off the wheel-box and stared at the big boom, swinging idly in the wind to all the slack of the cast-off sheet.

"Look her over, fellers," he said. "See ef she's sprung or started in any way. ——! I thought she'd ha' bin drug clean under."

"D' ye know what vessel it was?" inquir. d Henderson.

"Yes, I read her name on th' starn as she went by. Th' *Westonhall* of West Hartlepool. Ain't that what it was, Dexter?"

Dexter was the man whom Winslow had knocked off the wheel-box, and he had scarce recovered enough from his fright to give a coherent reply.

"Lord Harry! skipper, I don't know," he answered. "I'm all of a tremble. I never saw nawthin' but th' water streamin' over th' quarter, an' I jest cast off th' main-sheet when you yelled. Lordy! I was scared!"

The color was returning to the skipper's face and he laughed.

"Yes, Dexter-boy, you were scared, I cal'late, but you did fine. I don't mind admittin' I was pow'ful scared myself!"

A man known as Sleepy Dick Johnston came aft, and pushed his way through the mob.

"What's the racket, skipper?" said he. "Squall?"

"Squall?" roared Winslow amid the hilarious laughter of the gang. "Squall? For Heaven's sake, go down an' finish your sleep or I'll kick ye over th' rail."

Nothing was found to be damaged. The boom foot-ropes had drawn their bolts on the boom-end, and a few of the mainsail-hoops were sprung but, in spite of the dragging and buffeting she had received, the schooner was none the worse. With the

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gang setting up the slackened lanyards of the main-rigging, Winslow swung the vessel off on her course again, after unnecessary cautionings to the watch regarding the use of eyes and ears. After what had happened, they needed no admonitions.

That evening some one started the phonograph with the "Strolling Along" record. Winslow, on deck, heard the opening words and dived below.

"Shut that off an' gimme that record!" he demanded.

When it was handed to him he clambered on deck again, and hove it into the sea.

"Strolling along, was I?" he muttered. "Thinkin' nawthin' was wrong, eh? Well, there ye go, you hoodoo! I'll have lookouts fore an' aft in future, an' no phonographs a-playin' in fogs."

III

THE second officer of the tramp steamer *Westonhall* knocked respectfully on the chart-room door.

"Come in!" growled a thick voice, and the mate opened the door.

"Shuttin' down very thick, sir," he said. "Jest side-wiped a fishin' vessel a few minutes ago, an' I'm afraid there'll be a lot o' them around as we get down the bay. Hadn't I better ring her down, sir?"

"No! let her drive!" replied the master. "We've got t' be in Sydney to load that coal within th' nex' forty-eight hours. Nawthin' damaged when ye hit that fisherman, eh?"

"No, sir." The second greaser paused and added, "I didn't stop, sir. I don't think we hit him."

"Ye did right, m' lad," said the captain thickly. "Never stop if ye sh'd smack one o' those Yankee fishermen. They're always under your bows—always; an' ef they get hold of your name they'll raise all kinds of —— with their darned consuls. You're smart off'sher, m' lad, smart off'sher. All ri'—keep her goin' an' don' sthop for fish'-vess'ls. Call me when y' getsh Ca' Sable on four pointsh."

The second mate closed the door. "Drunken swine," he muttered. "Hope he'll pile her up an' give us all a chance for promotion." And he clambered up on the fog-drenched bridge.

In the wheel-house a Swede was steering, while a seaman of undeterminable nationality was pulling the whistle-cord at one-minute intervals. Over the canvas dodger, it was hard to discern the foremast from the bridge, and the second officer, who had never been in the Bay of Fundy before, anathematized the weather and wished he were elsewhere.

A bell tolled one stroke in the gloom ahead, and the officer peered over the dodger into the mist.

"All right!" cried he, as out of the pall loomed a three-masted schooner close-hauled under lower sails. A feeble horn wailed a note, and she was swallowed up.

"What a fog!" mused the officer. "And us loggin' ten or eleven knots through it. Jove! We'll be deuced lucky if we don't hit something."

He stepped over and peered at the clock in the wheel-house. "Fifteen minutes to eight. Um!" Then, to the sailor at the whistle-cord, "I'll take that. Go down an' call the chief officer."

The mate, stout and elderly, appeared on the stroke of eight bells. "Still hittin' it up?" he remarked. "Skipper still suckin' th' bally rum?"

"He's in his bunk," vouchsafed the other. "Told me t' keep her goin' an' call him when we get Cape Sable on th' four points. He'll never see th' Cape in this weather an' he must be crazy t' go anywhere near it. I'd be for haulin' her out a bit more."

"What's th' course?"

"South-forty-east was th' last I got at four o'clock. She's still headin' it. Skipper said it was all right till midnight."

The mate nodded. "I wonder ef he allowed for th' set o' th' tide they get in this place? There's a set o' two 'n' half knots with th' flood aroun' here."

The second mate was clambering down the ladder.

"Well, that ain't our business, Mr. Canning. He's skipper, an' he's th' joker that sets th' courses. He ain't given me any instructions, so if you want any, go an' see him yourself. Me for th' bunk—my middle watch t'-night."

Left alone, the mate nodded as the wheel-relief passed into the wheel-house and repeated the course. Then he leaned over the dodger and stared into the wreathing mist.

"Thick as mud," he murmured, "an' th' Old Man's tight as a drum—drinkin' ashore all mornin'. Nice night for a wreck. Breezin' up."

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The crow's-nest man tolled the bell, and the mate peered into the vapor.

"All right!" he growled, as a reeling gas-and-bell buoy flashed and clanged a scant ship's-length away.

"Wonder what that is?" The officer was worried and, half hesitant, he took another look around and clattered down the ladder to the chart-room.

After repeated knocking, he opened the door and found the master snoring in drunken slumber in his bunk.

"Whatsh marrer?" growled the Old Man, after the officer had shaken him.

"Just passed a flashing light-an'-bell buoy on starb'd hand. We're still steerin' that south-forty-east course you set this afternoon. Ain't it time t' change it?"

The Captain rolled back on his pillow. "'S'all ri'," he rumbled. "She's clear of everythin' till raise Ca' Sable."

The mate was not satisfied. "I think you'd better turn out, sir. It's thick as mud outside."

The skipper was snoring.

"Swab!" murmured the officer, and clambered on the bridge again.

"I'll take charge on my own hook," he said to himself and, reaching for the engine-room telegraph, he rung her down to "half speed."

"Now I'll haul her out. She must be gettin' inshore, with th' set o' that flood-tide. Um! Wheel there!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Let her go south, ten degrees east!"

"South, ten degrees east, it is, sir!"

The mate felt better, and the vessel slid through the fog-and-night-swathed sea at six knots. The firemen were cleaning fires. The ash-lift was clanking, and the lookout on the foc'sle-head sing-songed:

> "All th' lights are burning bright,
> An' all's we-e-ll!"

He broke off in his report with a half scream. "Light dead ahead!"

The mate jumped to the rail and mechanically grasped the engine-telegraph.

"Breakers ahead!" came from the crow's-nest, and the officer hauled the lever down to "Stop" and "Full astern."

Crunch! He was too late.

With a fearful grinding under her keel, the steamer's bow drove up on a sunken ledge, and the impact hove the officer against the after rail. Out from the foc'sle streamed the watch-below of sailors and firemen—a dozen tatterdemalion figures, Chinese stokers, Swedes and Norwegian deck-hands—all shouting with the first panic of fear.

While the steamer ground the bottom out of her in the sea, piling over the dangerous two-fathom ledge, the mate ran down into the chart-room.

The Captain was up—he was sailor enough to know what had happened—and he was sober.

"Well," said the chief officer, "we're done for. It's breezin' up an' she'll pound t' pieces in a little while. Will I get th' boats swung out?"

The skipper was white-faced and puffy with the after-effects of his carouse.

"Yes," he stuttered. "Let's get away from here. She's on th' Two-Fathom Ledge. We're too far inshore. You passed a buoy a little while ago, eh? 'Tain't in th' log, eh? We'll get our tickets smudged for this if we ain't careful. Get your log-book an' bring it here. We'll fix it up an' slide. Godfrey! How she's pounding!"

Thirty minutes later, two ship's boats were pulling through the fog for Cobtown Harbor, fourteen miles away, while the tramp steamer *Westonhall* banged and pounded her bottom out on the weed-covered Two-Fathom Ledge.

IV

UNDER her four lowers, the *Isabel Winslow* was slouching along through the steaming shroud. The phonograph was tabooed as long as the fog lasted, and the gang, except the skipper and the double watch of four men, had turned in early.

Winslow had taken a cast of the lead at four in the morning and, with the intimate knowledge of depths possessed by fishermen, accurately placed his position as being two miles to windward of the Two-Fathom Ledge gas-and-bell buoy. Noting the spot on the chart, he took off his oil-coat and, stretching out on a locker, glanced over the pictures in a magazine.

A story of the wild and woolly West was claiming his attention when he heard the watch for'ard shouting something about a steamer. In a flash, he was on his feet.

"What's that?" he bawled. "A steamer bearin' down?"

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He had scarce uttered the words before eight stocking-footed fishermen were tumbling out of their bunks—alert, nervous and with all the sleep banished from their brains.

"A steamer?" yelled Jimmy Thomas excitedly. "Gimme a shack-knife till I cut my throat! What a night!"

And, following the skipper, they crowded on deck.

"What's that, for'ard?"

The answer rolled back in the fog.

"Looks like a steamer ashore on Two-Fathom Ledge!"

The transition from fear to expectant joy was simply marvelous, and the manner in which Winslow scrambled up the forerigging would have done credit to a monkey.

"A steamer ashore? By th' Great Trawl-Hook! I believe it is! There's th' gas-buoy flashin' off our port bow an' there's a vessel's green light an' a masthead light showin' behind that. It's a steamer on th' Ledge all right—must ha' got out o' his course in th' fog. Oh, below thar! Jibe her over an' run down t' loo'ard o' th' gas-buoy!"

The August dawn was tinting the vaporous pall to a pearly gray when the schooner rounded to leeward of the wreck, and the growing daylight revealed a slate-hulled, rust-streaked tramp steamer of some three thousand tons almost high and dry on the rocks. It was low water, but the fresh westerly wind was driving a long creaming swell over the ledge and, as the breakers rolled in under the steamer's stern, she could be seen lifting perceptibly.

Winslow was peering at her through his binoculars, and the trawlers crowded around him to hear his comments.

"Anybody on her, skipper?" inquired Jimmy Thomas anxiously.

Jimmy had partaken of wrecks before, and he was naturally solicitous.

"Not a soul as I kin see," answered Winslow. "There ain't no boats—davit-tayckles are hangin' over th' side."

Old Jimmy gave a wild whoop and executed a few steps of the fisherman's hornpipe.

"She's abandoned! She's abandoned! Hooray! Over with th' dories, Harry, afore th' cutter comes pokin' around'!"

"Easy thar', Jimmy," cautioned the skipper. "Shin aloft somebody an' see ef ye kin make out th' cutter. She's likely t' be pokin' aroun' thisaways."

Wally Burke was hauling himself up the maintopsail-halyards for a clear sight, when Winslow made an ejaculation of surprise.

"Well, I'll be darned," he exclaimed, placing the glasses in their case. "That there's th' identical craft what banged us last night. *Westonhall* o' West Hartlepool! Lord Harry! What luck!"

Burke had crawled to the topsail-halyard block, and his voice came rolling down from aloft.

"Nawthin' in sight!"

"Good!" Winslow turned to the waiting gang.

Wrecks don't occur every day, and it would be a very peculiar fisherman indeed who did not take advantage of one.

"Make th' jumbo tail-rope fast. Sheet in your mains'l, an' away you go with th' dories! Dexter, Wally an' John—you stay aboard with me t' keep an eye on things."

DORIES never went over a vessel's side so fast as did eight of the *Isabel Winslow's* and, with the whole of them pulling their hardest in order to reach the prize first, it was an object-lesson as to the energy begotten in a man by the blood-firing, buccaneering incentive of "Loot!"

Dory after dory reeled alongside during those early morning hours, and their contents were a revelation in the way of variety. Number one, with Jimmy Thomas and Andy Watson in it, came to the vessel almost awash with plunder in the shape of a bulky Sir William Thomson standard compass; two brass engine-room telegraphs; a wheel-house clock and barometer; the bridge-wheel itself; brass skylight-rods; teak gratings; chart-room sofa-cushions; swivel-chair; brass lamps; blankets, mattresses, pillows and towels, besides a hundred smaller articles. These were all transferred to the hold, while the dory went back for another load.

It does not take long to loot a three-thousand, Tyne-built tramp steamer laden with water-ballast, as most of the spoils are to be gotten only from the vessel's fittings and the personal effects of her crew. In addition, Tyne-built tramps are not bristling with valuable standard compasses and brasswork, nor is there any service of silver to be found in the steward's pantry. Sleepy Dick Johnston thought he had hit a silver mine when he rifled the sideboard in the saloon, but the heavy plate turned out to be nickel and pewter.

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Hawsers, wire and manila, side-lights, cushions, carpets, bedding, canned food and iron gin-blocks constituted the bulk of the material "salved," and all dories, except Henderson's, were aboard and nested when the ominous blare of a siren rent the mist.

"Holy Sailor!" cried Winslow. "Th' cutter, by th' Great Hook Block! An' me a respectable married man, a shareholder in this vessel an' son-in-law to an Anchorville town-councilor, caught lootin' a wreck! Draw away for Heaven's sake!"

"Wait for Henderson, skipper!" said old Jimmy. "He's a-comin' now!"

And Henderson—the foe of Mrs. Murphy, washerwoman—*was* coming! He knew that whistle and it made him lay to his oars as he never did in trawling. Henderson had done some lobster-poaching in his day, and many a time had blessed the perspicacity of a Government which equipped its Fishery cruisers with whistles peculiar to themselves!

He was the only one who had not brought anything aboard and the gang were curious, so curious that, when he came alongside all hands were craning their necks to look into the dory.

A queer huddled heap lay crouching between the thwarts. It was clad in dungaree slops, oily—greasy rags, while the face, hands and feet of the creature was black—sooty black.

"It's a monkey!" cried one man, as he helped it over the rail.

"It's a negro!" vouchsafed another Sherlock Holmes.

Henderson leaped over the rail and set all deductions at naught. "Monkey an' nigger be ——," said he. "It's a Chineyman—an' I'm a-goin' t' spike Mrs. Murphy's guns with him! Come on, ol' son!"

And, lifting the little coal-and-grease-stained Oriental in his arms, he carried him down into the foc'sle.

V

IT WAS Henderson who was talking, while the schooner glided silently through the fog for the Seal Island grounds.

"Yes," he was saying, "I was jest takin' a turn aroun' her engine-room with a crowbar t' see ef thar was anythin' w'uth liftin' whin I hears a howlin' an' whinin' from th' stoke-hold. I wades through about three feet o' water inter that b'iler-room an' finds my yaller fr'end with his body jammed in a bunker-door. I cal'late he was trimmin' coal when she struck an' got caught somehow, while his mates skinned out an' left him. That's the idea, cook. Fill th' poor joker up with that coffee! He's a-goin' t' be th' best piece o' loot we ever scoffed from a wreck. Mrs. Murphy 'll wish she'd never bin so free with her blasted bar o' soap after I'm through with her!"

"What are ye a-goin' t' do?" queried a dozen mystified trawlers.

"What am I a-goin' t' do?" cried Henderson. "Why, I'm a-goin' t' take this yallerbelly back t' Anchorville an' set him up in th' laundry-business!"

And, while the gang pondered over this statement in a maze, the fisherman outlined his plan.

"Chineymen are born laundrymen. It's second natur' to them. Now you fellers know what trouble we've had with that Murphy woman to Anchorville; how she sp'iles yer duds an' rips all th' butttons off'n them an' sasses ye inter th' bargain. She give me a wipe on th' nut th' other day an' bust my new hat while I was argyfyin' with her, an' tells me she wanted no more fishermen's washin' t' do. She'll get no more, for, after this, Chop Suey here will do all th' washin' for the Anchorville trawlers."

Winslow, mugging up at the shack-locker, broke in.

"That's all right, Jack, an' a mighty good scheme, too—but how d' ye know he kin wash? He's been a coal-passer, by th' looks o' him."

Henderson addressed the blinking, slant-eyed figure in his bunk.

"Hey, you!" he bawled, under the impression that a foreigner understands you better when you shout at him, "You wishee-washee, eh? No tickee, no shirtee job?"

The Oriental shook his head.

"No savvy. Me tlimmer. Me tlimmer, gleaser an' donkeyman Hong Kong boat. Allee samee good fli'man. Got good discha'ge—velly good!"

"What in blazes is he a-sayin'?" queried Andy Watson. "Who knows his lingo?"

"Bring Tom Collins for'ard," said Winslow with a smile. "He oughter know th' Chink language pretty well. He's forever yarnin' about th' chop suey he got in Chinatown in Boston. Give him a hail."

Tom Collins came clattering down the

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ladder and the gang cleared the way for him.

"Tom," said Henderson, "you've th' name o' bein' quite a langwidge-ifyer an' ye have, by yer own sayin', traveled some among the Chinks in Boston. Now get busy an' ask this guy ef he kin wash clothes!"

Collins was endowed with a wit which might have been put to better use in other vocations than trawling and, after a glance at the blinking Canton coolie, he swung around and asked the cook for a cake of soap and a dirty towel.

"Look-see!" he said when the articles had been handed to him. "Ching, ching, Chinaman, hi mucka hi! Chop suey, savvy!" And he held out the soap and towel. Comprehension seemed to dawn upon the yellow man's sooty face at once and, tumbling out of the bunk, he grasped the soap and towel and shuffled to the galley-sink.

"Tom's got him!" cried the gang slapping the blushing linguist on the back, and they crowded around the Oriental, who calmly proceeded to wash his face!

When Collins had discreetly retired, it was Sleepy Dick Johnston who rolled out of his bunk and saved the day. Slouching aft with an old, gurry-smeared shirt and a pair of socks, he threw them easily into the sink and touched the Chinaman on the shoulder.

"Wash 'em!" he growled, and retired, slopping his stags into his bunk again.

To the delight of all, the yellow man washed the clothes, and it almost brought tears into Henderson's eyes to see the manner in which his prize scrubbed and wrung out that old shirt.

"By th' Lord Harry! He's a-goin' t' be a bird," he ejaculated, and the Chink nodded. "Yes! I good wash! I wash secon' engineе's clothes all time on Tina Malu boat. Me wash chop-chop!"

During the whole ten days the *Isabel Winslow* was fishing, the survivor had plenty of practise, for he washed out the clothes of every man aboard.

THERE is a law in Canada as well as in the United States which decrees that a Chinaman can not enter and reside in the country unless he pays a head-tax of five hundred dollars. While the majority of the *Isabel Winslow's* crew were ignorant of this, yet the skipper was better informed and, when they swung off from La Have with seventy-five thousand of shack, there were many plans to be discussed. The loot, stowed in the after pens of the hold, was to be stored in Johnny Leblanc's bait-shed on Gull Island until a deal with either an Anchorville or Cobtown junk-dealer could be made. Jack Henderson and the Chinaman were to be landed in a dory at a cove some ten miles below Anchorville and to remain at a lobsterman's place until telephoned for.

Under cover of the fog, which had scarce lifted the whole time they were at sea, they shot in and transferred the salvage and, standing up the coast again, the Oriental and Henderson were landed on the beach "to await further orders."

Back in Anchorville once more, each man was pledged to secrecy, and the skipper went and rented an old shanty near the wharves for, as he said, "a Chinese laundryman that Jack Henderson was bringin' up from Cobtown to do trawlers' washin'."

The hat was passed around the gang and, when Henderson and a respectable looking heathen landed from the Cobtown train one fine morning, there was a new and fully equipped laundry in town which, as the notice pasted upon the window said, catered exclusively to the washing of fishermen at most reasonable rates.

The rates were indeed most reasonable. The washing was done well. And Mr. Chop Suey, ex-fireman S. S. *Westonhall*, logged with the British Consul at Singapore as Yuen Lung, drowned in loss of vessel on Canadian coast, prospered accordingly.

VI

IT WAS two or three trips later when each man pocketed a substantial little check for some "junk" bought by a Cobtown dealer who had ways and means of disposing of it. Henderson was feeling particularly good and, on a bright October morning, he swung down the road from his boarding-house whistling a song. As he stepped past his former laundrywoman's establishment, he heard his name called, and wheeled around to see Mrs. Henrietta Murphy beckoning to him.

"Th' top of th' mornin' to ye, Mr. Henderson."

She greeted him effusively, and Henderson grunted most ungallantly.

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"Won't ye sthep inside a moment, Mr. Henderson," entreated the washlady, with a beguiling look on her Celtic features.

"Naw," answered the fisherman. "I remember th' last time I was in yer place."

"Ah, Mr. Henderson," replied Henrietta sorrowfully, "'Tis me that felt a sad woman afther that regrettable incidint. Sure, I jist lost my timper intoirely that day, Mr. Henderson. I was worried, so t' spake, what with th' price o' soap, bleachin' an' starch——"

"Hum!" grunted the other.

The washerwoman clasped her hands.

"O Mr. Henderson! What did ye want for t' ruin a poor widow woman by bringin' that slant-eyed heathen to Anchorville? Me with five childer, an' wearin' my fingers t' th' bone in order t' keep th' poor dears from th' almshouse? Mr. Henderson! Why sh'd ye go out o' yer way t' ruin me? Th' yaller idolator has taken all my work away from me! He's washin' starch shirts fur five cents an' I c'd jest make a livin' on ten. Collars he's doin' fur a cent apiece, an' two cents is th' lowest I c'd charge t' make a livin'. Underclothes an' other things at half my rates, an' he's gittin' all th' townfolks' custom. O Mr. Henderson—" the trawler winced at the repeated appeals—"how in Holy Mary's name kin I compete with a man what lives on ten cents' o' rice a week an' gits all th' salt hake he wants by liftin' thim off th' flakes?"

And Mrs. Murphy collapsed in tears.

Henderson felt perturbed and was about to move away when the lady of the tub began again.

"O Mr. Henderson, I'm a poor trawler's widow, I am, an' you know it. Poor Mike Murphy—wan o' th' finest o' th' deep-sea trawlers out o' Anchorville—drowned while carryin' out his dooty on th' waters——"

"I thought he got out on a drunk in Cobtown an' fell inter th' dock?"

"O Mr. Henderson! How kin ye sthand thar an' despise th' name o' wan o' th' finest men that iver hauled a trawl? God knows, ye've worked me enough ill 'thout slanderin' my pore husband. We'll be starvin' soon, an' 'twill be laid at your door—yes, ye'll hev much to answer for, Mr. Henderson, whin th' houly St. Peter calls ye to account. Ochone! 'tis a heart of flint ye have, an' a poor widow woman's tears can not move ye!"

While the lady's shoulders were heaving in elephantine sobs and she was swabbing her eyes with her apron, Henderson was thinking.

Mrs. Murphy was the relict of a deceased fisherman—albeit a lazy, dissolute one—yet the common bond of sympathy which unites the fraternity of the deep-sea trawlers was working on his sympathies. He was wavering and, with a woman's intuition, Mrs. Murphy sensed it.

"O Mr. Henderson," she wailed, "get that yaller heathen away from here an' I'll look afther ye. Ye'll git yer washin' at half the old price an' done up like a lord's——"

"An' th' buttons?" grunted the other. "How about th' buttons?"

"Iv'ry blessed button that's gone shall be sewed on agin whether I bruk them off or not! I'll patch an' mend any little skags for ye, Mr. Henderson, an' not a cent extra will I charge."

"Um!" The trawler scratched his head. "I'll do my best, Mrs. Murphy, but it'll be quite a job! Ef I git him away, ye'll need never open yer trap about me bein' in it."

"S' help me, Mr. Henderson," vociferated the lady, "I'll niver breathe a word, an' 'tis a poor widow woman's blessin's that'll be showered on you this night."

And, as the fisherman walked away, her beatitudes on his head rang in his ears.

"Holy Sailor!" he muttered when he got out of hearing. "I wonder what I kin do 'thout gittin' th' gang down on me? I can't make th' Chink go away. He's doin' too well. An' I can'——"

He paused as an inspiration shot through his mind.

"By th' Lord Harry!" he cried triumphantly. "I've got it! Th' head-tax!"

A casual word dropped in the course of a conversation to Zebedee Publicover, the Anchorville customs-officer, resulted in the unlucky Chop Suey being apprehended and taken to Halifax in custody of an immigration-officer. Two months later the one-time Anchorville laundryman was shoveling coal on a steamboat trading in the Gulf of Mexico. Mrs. Murphy's star was in the ascendant again.

Henderson was pleased with his laundry, while Harry Winslow, thinking over events, and fingering a substantial "salvage" check, decided that the schooner's phonograph needed a new record. He purchased one entitled, "Strolling Along."

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The House Behind The Wall

Wherein is Truthfully Related The Strange Secret of Adam Newman

by

Albert Kinross

CHAPTER I

ADAM NEWMAN DISCOVERS A PECULIAR OLD GENTLEMAN

THE reader, examining his map of London, will find a district labeled "St. John's Wood." Maybe, indeed, he has actually known that quarter, which, starting somewhere near Regent's Park, extends to Hampstead on the north, to Kilburn on the west, and, on its southern border, almost to Baker Street and Madame Tussaud's.

In modern London it is one of the few mysterious and semi-rural quarters that remain; mysterious, because so many of its stucco villas lie hidden behind high walls; semirural, because upon so many of its garden gates is painted the legend, "Beware of the Dog." Careful inquiry has disclosed the fact that there is no dog or, at most, a lap-dog. Yet at some date, and that not too remote, there must have been dogs.

Naturally, a quarter so secluded abounds with those who have reason to shun their kind. Editors, for instance, artists, authors and actresses, with a desire for privacy. It is, therefore, a Bohemian quarter; successful Bohemia is here in force.

INTO this maze of winding roads and smoke-soiled gardens there turned one Autumn evening a solitary fruit-hawker—fruit and vegetables, to be exact. It was the tender hour that precedes the twilight, yet of this and similar phenomena he took no heed. The long day's work was all but over. One last brave effort and he would be free. Save for a few odd pounds of apples, he was clean sold out, so much so that, when he moved, you could hear the money jingling all over him, and he sounded like sledge-bells on a frosty night.

Adam Newman was the name of him and, except for a prominent and well-developed pigeon-breast, he looked much like other young men of his trade and station—a prosperous fellow, apparently, as hawkers go. For, instead of shoving behind a movable

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stall or barrow, he drove a serviceable horse attached to a no less serviceable cart. His apples reposed at the bottom of various half-bushel baskets and, to all who would hear and many who wouldn't, this migrant proclaimed their virtues and their price.

"Cookers—full o' juice," he would cry at intervals; "a penny a poun' an' pick where yer like. All meat an' no core. Same as yer pays tuppence for in a shop, ma'am. I'm givin' 'em away—I wants ter be done with it an' go home ter the missus."

He had no "missus," yet this did not deter him; and even a worse prevarication was to follow.

"Eaters — Cox's Orange Pippins — all ripe!" came next. "Sweet as honey an' thruppence the poun'—two poun' fer fivepence, an' six ter the poun'—who'll buy? I'm givin' 'em away. I wants ter be done with it an' go home ter the missus *an' the kids* . . . Two poun' for you, ma'am? Pick where yer like . . . Yer ain't got nothink smaller? Two an' a penny change, ma'am —take a poun' of cookers fer the penny? Can't I tempt yer, ma'am?"

He couldn't, apparently, for the lady went off nursing her bag of pippins, and not a single cooker lay among them.

Adam's next customer was a bald-headed old gentleman whose cheery face had just popped over a garden wall. It was a high wall, and it seemed likely that the old gentleman's feet rested on a pair of steps the other side.

"Pippins?" began the old gentleman. "Who said pippins?"

"I did," responded Adam Newman promptly. "Pick where you like."

"How the deuce can I pick from up here?"

"Half a mo'. I'll bring 'em to yer."

Adam was as good as his word, and presently he had handed up a basket containing several pounds.

"You're a fruit-hawker," announced the old gentleman. "You go round selling fruit with that horse and cart."

Outwardly Adam was all politeness.

"You've got a pigeon-breast!"

It was Adam's sore point but, business being business, he kept his thoughts to himself and, outwardly at least, was as polite as ever.

"I see it!" cried the old gentleman. "I see it!"

"Der you want any apples or don't yer?" inquired Adam Newman.

"I'll take one apple."

"Yer mean a poun'. I only sells 'em by the poun'."

"I mean one apple. Here's a penny, and you can keep the change."

So saying the old gentleman tossed a copper into the road, helped himself to an apple and took a bite at it.

He shuddered. He spluttered. He took a second bite.

"Sour as vinegar!" he cried. And, before Adam could realize what had happened or frame a retort, the bitten apple had whizzed across and burst to fragments on his nose.

"Good shot!" cried the old gentleman. "Here's another—and another."

He had begun a bombardment. With the half-bushel basket in one hand, he helped himself to pippin after pippin, and every one was hurled at Adam's head.

IT WAS incredible. So gross an outrage had never been perpetrated on Adam before. Tiresome customers he had, who haggled and made a fuss and cheated. Yet most of them were models of deportment and, as for flinging his own apples at his head——

"You'll pay for this," he cried, "you'll pay for it!"

Marching to the door that was let into the long high wall, he turned the handle.

"Ho-ho!" roared the old gentleman from above.

That door was locked and bolted, and Adam shook it, kicked at it, in vain. While he fought with it, a pippin caught him on the ear, another hit him on the chin and a third went harmlessly off his shoulder.

Baffled, he made for that part of the wall where the old gentleman was conducting operations.

"I'll get the perlice to yer!" he cried. "See if I don't!"

The old gentleman turned the basket upside down. It was empty.

"Got any more?" he asked.

"You'll pay up fer half a bushel or I'll fetch the perlice," responded Adam firmly.

"'Perlice' be jiggered! Why don't you say po-lice?" cried the old gentleman. Then, with a movement of surprising swiftness, he had the basket fast over Adam's head.

Safe on his perch above, he shook with laughter. He roared, he exploded. Adam struggled for a moment. The basket, arrested by a hard felt hat, required some

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shifting. At last he had it off and was free to climb the wall.

For he was going to climb the wall. Business considerations or no business considerations, he was going after that old gentleman, even if it meant trespassing and an encounter in the other's garden. Adam's dander was up. A rage possessed him. He'd teach that old gentleman! He'd learn him! He explained these sentiments before advancing to the attack.

The top of the wall was smooth and Adam active as a monkey. Once he could lay hands on it he would pull himself up, and then over he would go and drop down on the other side.

The old gentleman had disappeared. Yet he was there right enough, for Adam could hear him crying, "Pippins—pick where you like!"

It was a very good imitation. Provoked by this new outrage, Adam took his first leap and reached the top of the wall with both his hands.

Then, "Oah!" he cried.

It was a great shout of pain; and now, overlooking him, stood that same impenitent old gentleman armed with a large brick—one of those corrugated, swollen and unnatural looking bricks that you find in the rockeries of London gardens. During his temporary disappearance he had evidently detached this article from its proper place, and, of course, he had banged it down on Adam's hands as they clutched at the wall.

Adam had dropped into the roadway, where three small boys had now collected, all deeply engrossed in this encounter.

"Come on," yelled the old gentleman in an ecstasy of delight, "I'm ready for you—never say die!" and he flourished his brick and capered so wildly that Adam, who as yet knew nothing of the rockery, concluded that there must be a platform on the other side, or else that the ground was higher and the wall, therefore, lower on that side than on this.

Secreting a damaged cooker in one hand, he advanced again to the attack.

This time he feinted, gave a leap as before but, instead of his hands closing with the top of the wall, he flung the cooker. Unfortunately it missed its aim and, moreover, put the old gentleman upon his guard. The strategem could hardly be repeated.

"Come on," yelled the old gentleman. "You're afraid—you're a white-livered hound, that's what you are! Only let me get hold of you! Now then—once more—charge!"

He stood there, waving his brick and as excited as any schoolboy.

Adam collected all the rotten stuff he could find, and at last he had the satisfaction of seeing a good-sized cooker burst on the enemy's bald head. He followed this up by a second assault upon the wall, but again the brick proved too much for him.

"Come on," roared the old gentleman. "I'm waiting. Don't keep me here all night! Perhaps you've had enough? Cox's Orange Pippins, indeed!"

While these taunts were filling the placid airs of St. John's Wood, Adam had an inspiration. It was the simplest thing in the world, and it was difficult now to understand why he had not seen it from the first.

"Who's afraid?" yelled the old gentleman. "Why, I'm ready for a dozen like you! Come on, young man, come on!"

The three small boys, now grown to a happy group of five and a postman, looked on in amazement while Adam drove his cart as far as the corner, turned it round and then guided it on to the pavement.

At first the old gentleman had misunderstood the nature of this maneuver.

"You've had enough!" he shouted. "I'm here whenever you like to call!" But soon the true character of this mock retreat had dawned upon him.

"I say," he protested, "I say—that's not allowed."

The horse and cart were now broadside on against the wall. As Adam leaped, the old gentleman flung his brick and disappeared. So did Adam. From that thrilling moment onward, whatever might have been enacted on the other side of the high wall was hidden from the enraptured gaze of the five urchins. They stood there dolefully, watching the horse and cart upon the pavement. Presently the horse, as though aware that it had no business upon a portion of the road reserved for pedestrians, retired of its own initiative to the proper quarter, and waited patiently, absorbed in its own hopes and meditations.

WHILE the five boys, the postman and two artist's models in hobble-skirts and picture-hats who had just joined them, are gathering pippins in

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the roadway, let us follow Adam Newman's example and leap the wall.

Safe and secure behind his fortifications, the old gentleman had pranced upon his rockery and been as brave as any lion. He had shouted challenges, he had flung taunts and apples, he had waved his brick, he had dared Adam to "come on." But once Adam had "come on" and was fairly after him, this hero collapsed with an amazing suddenness.

"Help—murder—thieves!" he cried, even before Adam could lay a finger on him. "He's killing me—he's strangling me—oh, help!"

They were in a small garden that belonged to a small villa, whose front door you reached by a flight of gray stone steps. Down these steps now poured a young lady in a mauve painting-smock, a young gentleman in tweeds and a startled servant-girl in cap and apron.

"Help!" yelled the old gentleman, louder than ever.

"What is it, uncle?" asked the young lady, running to him. "I thought I'd locked the gate and bolted it."

"Don't let him come near me!" and the old gentleman indicated Adam Newman.

"What do you want?"

The young gentleman in tweeds had interposed between Adam and his adversary.

"Want!" snorted Adam, "I wants everythink!"

"Well, you can't get it here."

Adam Newman took off his coat and hat and laid them down upon the grass.

"I'm a-goin' ter bash somebody," he announced. "That ole gentleman thinks as he can do as he likes wi' me; but not if I knows it!"

"He-he!" giggled the old gentleman, his confidence restored. "We're four to one my boy; we're four to one!"

It was the last straw. Adam saw red and, had not the young lady in the mauve smock laid a restraining hand upon his pigeon-breast, there is no telling what he might not have done in that secluded garden.

"Take Uncle George indoors," she said, ever so firmly.

"But you——" The young man in the tweed suit hesitated.

"I'm quite safe. You wouldn't hit a woman, would you?"

She had turned to Adam, and was smiling more like an angelic lion-tamer than a young thing in a painting-smock.

"I doan' know about that," responded Adam.

"I do," she insisted; and, to the young man in tweeds, "Away with Uncle George!"

Reluctantly he obeyed, dragging the old gentleman round to a side door and disappearing with him.

"Lor', Miss Hagnes," shrieked the servant-girl, "we're all alone with 'im!"

"Well, it wouldn't be the first young man we've been alone with," was the confident reply. "Now tell me all about it?"

She was addressing Adam and, soothed by her even voice, her fearless air, he began to explain matters.

The young man came back and found the two ladies listening and Adam more peacefully inclined.

"Uncle George has been at it again," she of the mauve smock announced. "We can't blame this—this gentleman."

"Threw a whole half-bushel basket o' pippins at my head," concluded Adam ruefully, "an' took a brick from that there rockery an' rapped my hands wi' it. It's in the road now, where he threw it. P'r'aps yer'd like ter fetch it an' see fer yerself."

"My uncle was governor of the island of Tobago—it's very hot there and he caught sunstroke. That makes him queer at times. You must overlook it. He's usually very nice," explained the young lady, "but every once in a while——"

"He goes off his dot, like?" asked Adam, nodding in sympathy.

"That's it, exactly," she answered with a smile. "And now you'll put on your coat and hat again; and perhaps you'd like to come in and have a cup of tea? Of course we'll pay for the apples, and we'll buy some more as well. You see, he didn't mean any harm. You must come some other day when he's quite himself."

The young lady, as befitted the niece of an ex-governor of an important British colony, certainly had a way with her. Before Adam departed he had taken a cup of tea in the kitchen with the servant-girl; he had been compensated for the pippins, and had sold out the small remainder of his stock of cookers; and he had even promised to call again with a bundle of celery and a half-hundredweight bag of potatoes.

Thus are connections made in this commercial world of ours.

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CHAPTER II

THE TUMULTUOUS PASSIONS OF A PIGEON-BREAST

NOW there would be nothing in the barbaric encounter which we have just endeavored to describe and which, at the best, might amuse a schoolboy or an overgrown cannibal, were it not for the fact that this same encounter marked a turning-point in Adam Newman's history.

He had entered St. John's Wood free as air. He left that quarter conquered by a devouring affection for the ex-governor's servant-girl. Love at first sight was his complaint. Nor was he aware of it till he had come out of the kitchen and joined his horse and cart, waiting all mutely for his reappearance.

In any other part of London, they would have attracted the attention of the police, and Adam been fined for neglecting an important by-law. In St. John's Wood, however, an unattended horse and cart may wait by the hour. The police of that crimeless district are always half asleep and are chosen from the fattest, most good-natured and most negligent.

Driving homeward, Adam realized with a shock that he was in love. It must be love that made him feel so generous and inclined to part with all his possessions for the mere asking. Luckily, he reflected, he was clean sold out, or else there was no telling what he might not have done. He hoped that it wouldn't last beyond the evening, for a continuation of this mood might spell blue ruin.

What precisely had happened to effect this change in one who, hitherto, had concerned himself more with fruit and vegetables than with the sex? He had been invited into the kitchen and given his tea—bread and butter and jam and cake He had sat there sheepishly devouring it. The girl had waited on him and smirked and pouted like the affected minx she was. And all the time poor innocent Adam was sinking deeper and deeper into it.

He loved her so much that it hurt. She was so clean and spruce and tidy in her neat black dress and snow-white cap and apron. And the pretty face of her and figure of her! If you had been shouting, "Cookers—a penny a poun'," all day and driving a horse and cart, you might have felt the same as Adam Newman, or even worse. So it's no good sniffing at him and putting on airs. Perhaps you would have written poetry and expected her to understand it. Adam was wiser. He sat there most respectfully and ate and drank and swallowed.

"NOBODY'D think as you was such a terror," she said at last; "not to look at you, they wouldn't."

"It's only when I'm roused," he made reply.

"Then you're a fair demon."

"Am I?" he asked.

"A fair demon," she repeated; and her brown eyes filled with admiration as she gazed on him.

That look settled Adam; finished him off as clean as the surgeon's knife finishes off an operation. He was hers, and she seemed to know it and to enjoy it, as women have done and always will do as long as there's one of them left.

"The way you flung yer 'at an' coat off!" she exclaimed. "An' me an' Miss Hagnes all alone wi' yer! An' Mr. Hoswald takin' the Master indoors. 'E's very tryin' when he do carry on. We locks 'im in the garden till 'e's 'isself ag'in. 'E often 'as a go at 'awkers; but most of 'em roun' 'ere knows 'im an' takes no notice."

She prattled so prettily that Adam lost some of his diffidence.

"Wot's your name?" he asked.

"I'll give you three guesses," said she.

"Liza?"

"Liza!" she pouted.

"How can I tell?"

"Try ag'in. It begins wi' a Hem."

"Hemma?" he cried; but Hemma, apparently, didn't begin with a Hem; it began with a He.

She was Mabel—Mabel Pope—she told him at last. The master of the house was Mr. Chittenden, and his niece was Miss Hagnes, and Mr. Hoswald was Miss Hagnes's young man. So now Adam knew all about it; and there was a cook, and it was her day out.

"Cook 'll be sorry she missed you," said Mabel at the end.

"I ain't missed *her*," ventured Adam; and that was as far as he got on this visit.

She saw him out at the back door, and Miss Agnes and Mr. Oswald were strolling in the garden.

"Feel better now?" asked Mr. Oswald.

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"You're coming again, aren't you?" said Miss Agnes.

Adam Newman touched his hat to them and went outdoors to join his horse and cart.

THE first thing to shatter Adam's fond hopes and visions was the awful discovery that his Mabel was engaged to a real live lord.

He had brought the celery and the half-hundredweight sack of potatoes and he had been asked in to tea again. The cunning rogue had driven up about tea-time, hoping some such invitation might be given.

It was.

Moreover, Miss Agnes had presented Adam to her uncle, who seemed to have no recollection whatever of his recent outbreak, and only said, "Now did I—now did I, really?" when it was referred to. To-day he was a most dignified and even pompous old party in a white waistcoat and official-looking coat.

"Perhaps you'd like to stay for tea?" suggested Miss Chittenden, and rang for Mabel.

Of course Adam hesitated, but anybody could see that he was shamming and had come on purpose to be asked.

In the kitchen this time he found Mrs. Green, the cook, who said she was very glad he had "given the old gent a lesson."

"Sometimes he comes in and carries on down here," she pursued, "an' what can *I* do to him, single-handed?—for Mabel's no good, she takes to her heels. I'm glad Green never had no sunstroke. It'd 'a' been the worse for him if he had."

And Adam heard about Green till he was sick and tired of him, and felt that all women who talked your head off your shoulders ought to be drowned. . . . "Like kittens," he said, suddenly and thinking aloud, a habit he had.

"No, I don't like kittens," responded Mrs. Green, "an' I'll tell you why."

And she thereupon proceeded to tell him why, and heaps more into the bargain.

When she was so exhausted that she couldn't go on, she said,

"An' who may you be, Mr. Newman? I hope you don't think me pryin'-like," etc., etc., etc.

Poor Mabel, who so far had only been able to converse with her soft brown eyes, looked up and met Adam's. Emboldened by her murmur of encouragement, he gave a brief *résumé* of his own history.

"An' did yer father really tumble off a ladder an' break 'is neck?" asked Mabel, when it was over. "Oh, 'ow dreadful!"

"I never see'd him," responded Adam. "It's wot they tole me. He used ter clip the ivy on the church-front once a year, an' when he come to the bell-tower his foot slipped an' down he come wi' a bump and bruk his neck. I doan' remember it—it's wot they tole me."

"An' did yer mother really leave yer on a door-step an' sling 'er 'ook?'"

"I never said she lef' me on a door-step. But she did sling her hook, an' the rent owin' an' everythink. I s'pose she thought as I was big enough ter take care o' mysel' now."

"They must be horful people in the country where you comes from. London's bad enough," commented Mabel. "Aren't yer glad yer got away an' come to London?"

She had listened to him as Desdemona listened to Othello, and he, the cunning fellow, had for the most part addressed himself to Mrs. Green. That way it looked less as though he were making a bid for Mabel's sympathy.

"An' yer worked outdoors ever since yer was fourteen, an' lived in 'uts instead o' 'ouses, an' sometimes yer slep' on the groun' in yer clothes an' all?"

"There's lots do it," said Adam simply.

"An' at last yer tramped to London an' started in the 'awkin'-line—you'll never go back now?" she asked throwing up her hands.

It was at this fascinating moment that the up-stairs bell rang, and Mabel had to tear herself away.

"Don't go till I come back ag'in," she said, smiling at him over her shoulder. "It's like a tale in a story-book—there's plenty worse than that—I ought ter know for I reads 'em all."

"She do indeed," piped up Mrs. Green, when Mabel was gone. "There's not a penny book that ever was written but that there Mabel don't get hold of it an' squeeze it dry. It's turned her 'ead;" and with this startling announcement she subsided into an unusual silence and looked at Adam as much as to say that, an she would, she could tell him something.

"Yer doan' really mean it?" he said after a pause.

"Indeed I does," she whispered darkly. "It's all along o' them books that she's

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got in tow wi' a real live lord. Promised to marry her, too, he has. But I know them. He won't marry her if he is a true lord. But she's that romantic that she won't listen to me, an' though she's had plenty o' good offers, nothing 'll content her but his Royal 'Ighness. It's them there story-books—in all them story-books slavies marry lords. But in real life, Lor' bless yer, there ain't much marryin' o' that kind! They marries chorus-girls for looks sometimes, an' Americans for money, an' ladies when they's properly brought up. 'E got talkin' to 'er on a seat one Sunday in Hyde Park—she ain't got nobody's word but his—but she's that romantic an' possessed he's turned her 'ead. P'r'aps I oughtn't ter have told you about it. But she's proud of it, instead o' being ashamed. She wouldn't look at him if he was ordinary like you an' me—what with his snub nose an' turn-in legs an' all—but she's gone clean daf' because he told her as how he was a real live lord."

This time poor Adam had listened without a word of inward protest and, though it hurt, he had fastened on every syllable and could not hear enough.

"D'yer mean it?" he asked, after a long pause.

Yes, Mrs. Green meant it, and what was she to do? She asked Adam's advice.

"Leave him ter me," he answered. "I'll deal wi' him if he ain't playin' fair—an' if he is, I s'pose I'd best give up."

The last part of this answer was muttered to himself and not to Mrs. Green.

Crestfallen and without waiting for Mabel's return he left the house behind the wall in St. John's Wood, while Mrs. Green, pottering off into the larder, selected the victuals that had to be cooked for this evening's dinner and put aside the best bits for herself.

CHAPTER III

ADAM NEWMAN DOES CRAFTILY

A FEW days later toward the amorous hour of 8:30 P.M., Adam Newman might have been observed, minus his horse and cart, and—we admit it with regret—playing the downright spy. Lurking, watching and following, he was on the tracks of Mabel Pope and more especially on the tracks of her lordly lover.

He had no difficulty in recognizing the fellow. Moreover, the face seemed vaguely familiar, reminding Adam of a face known very long ago. He could not say whose face, but somebody's, surely. Faces have a knack of eluding one in the most awkward way. But the snub nose, the bold eyes, the jerky air, were all reminiscent. Where had he met their likes, or something near related?

After much pondering he gave it up and bent his mind to the object now in view. His first duty was to prove to Mabel Pope that her lover was no lord but a mere common humbug.

Mrs. Green's description, embracing as it did a pair of bandy legs, was so complete that Adam had no doubt but that this was the fellow. If he had had doubts, these would swiftly have been put at rest by the way Mabel met her lover at the corner and the truly horrible manner in which that scoundrel raised his hat and offered his arm.

It was Mabel's evening out apparently, and she was dressed up like a lady, or what Adam regarded as a lady, in finery that must have cost her at least six months' wages, even if she paid cash down and had no dealings with the tallyman. Her lover, Adam noticed with confusion, was equally resplendent, and sported patent boots, a well-cut overcoat and glossy hat. He, for his part, was more shabby than usual, having disguised himself in last year's suit of clothes and a large-peaked cap that concealed his face.

There is no need to depict the torture and the agony endured by Adam as he followed the couple under the gas-lamps, shadowed them through Circus Road, then up Henry Street and to a bench on Primrose Hill, where they seated themselves and appeared to be most comfortable. The London lovers whose courtships are conducted publicly outdoors are a pleasing feature of the giant city, and one recorded by every foreign observer who has kept a note-book.

Adam did not keep a note-book. Instead he waited patiently and obscurely till it was time for Mabel to get home again, and then back to St. John's Wood he trudged, following cautiously and unostentatiously in the wake of the happy pair. The good-night kiss that they exchanged made his blood boil. But how could the poor wretch interfere?

"Lord or no lord," he ejaculated, "he didn't oughter kiss her under me nose!"

He forgot it was his own fault that his

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nose was there at all. Love's terrible egotism had blinded him.

At last they separated.

"Now we'll see!" cried Adam. "I'll find out where he lives and all about him."

FIVE minutes later the young man, quite unconscious that he was being shadowed, passed Adam Newman by under a gas-lamp. As at first, the fruit-hawker had a sensation of a face known intimately long years ago, but to-day forgotten and unaccountable. He went over all the faces that memory held, town faces and country faces, and even the sordid faces of his customers, and still that nose, those eyes, that brow, eluded him.

"I gives it up," he murmured as before. "I gives it up. I gives it up."

The reason why he gave it up three times where once would have been ample was that he had little else to do while this shadowing lasted.

Confounded little else!

"Why doan' he take a motor-bus instead o' makin' me go trampin' arter him all night?" groaned Adam, after the first mile or so. "I'm sick o' walkin'—I ain't used ter it. Lor', if I only had me horse an' cart handy!"

It was a natural reflection; for all horse-and-cart hawkers have tender feet, they only using these extremities when they really must.

"Now where's he goin'?" asked Adam, when they passed into Oxford Street. "I wish he'd take a taxi an' be done wi' it, even tho' it cost me two bob. An' he ain't walkin' fer pleasure. A bandy-legged bloke like him doan' walk fer pleasure!"

The young man certainly did not look very spry, and there was little of the athlete about him.

"I doan' believe he's got the price o' a bus-fare on him, wi' all his fine clothes an' shiny boots," continued Adam. "A lord indeed! Would any lord go walkin' fer miles an' miles?"

These insults and exclamations relieved Adam's feelings somewhat as they passed up Holborn and turned at last into that maze of poverty-stricken rookeries which abuts on Red Lion Square. Before a shabby house with a card in the window, the lover halted and fumbled for his key. He let himself in, and Adam was free to inspect the card.

"Lodgings for Single Men," it announced.

"So that settles *him!*" cried Adam. "Lodges here on the cheap. He's single, anyhow! Yer never knows whether these here lords ain't married!"

Footsore yet triumphant, the fruit-hawker noted the position of the house and returned by motor-bus to his own quarters. They were at least as good as the lord's, he reflected with a sigh of satisfaction, and all the furniture was his own and none of it borrowed.

BUT Adam's task was only half completed. He knew where the other lived now. The next step would be to discover the scoundrel's occupation. Though it meant the loss of a half-day's business, he was determined to investigate that point as well.

So, early next morning, he was before the house again. With a short clay pipe between his teeth and drawing nicely, he waited down the street. This time he had brought his horse and cart along with him. No more tramping: not another yard would he walk if he could help!

Toward eight o'clock his patience was rewarded. Five minutes short of that hour the young man came out of the house and, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, made off hurriedly in the direction of Red Lion Square and Holburn.

"Late yer are an' you'll catch it," muttered Adam Newman. "Doan' blame me if yer gets the sack! I hope yer will, yer lyin' rascal!"

To-day the lover was shabbily dressed in a dark suit and worn felt hat. Adam followed him easily as far as a tobacconist's shop in a turning off New Oxford Street and close to the British Museum. Here the young man entered and disappeared, to return a moment later in apron and shirt-sleeves and accompanied by a large bass-broom which he handled deftly.

"He's a-sweepin' out the shop," chuckled Adam. "Serves in it, too," he added. "I'm goin' inside ter see fer mysel'."

A moment later Adam had entered the shop and called for a tuppenny twist of shag. The young man interrupted his sweeping and repaired to the counter.

"A terbacconist's man," exploded Adam, as soon as he was safely in the street again; "an' he has the nerve to go about a-callin' hisself a lord!"

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CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH APPEARS A LIVE EARL

SOME sixty miles away from St. John's Wood and deep in the county of Kent lies Elmsford, an ancient market-town that serves a wide and prosperous rural district. Here, every Thursday, save when there's foot and mouth disease about, the local farmers come together and watch with beating hearts the frantic efforts of their auctioneers. Fat beasts and fatter pigs are knocked down to the highest bidder; flocks are dispersed and lambs torn from their indifferent mamas; wool, hops and corn are shown in samples that err on the side of flattery, and at two o'clock or so the day's work is over and everybody sits down to a hearty meal.

The market, however, does not exhaust the energies of Elmsford. In one of its old-world streets dwell the men of law; a round dozen or so of family solicitors, who advise the neighboring gentry, and assist them in such delicate matters as loans, mortgages, settlements and investments. All the big local families have here their men of business and, entering one or another of these dusty office-buildings, you would find deed-boxes from floor to ceiling, each inscribed with a high-sounding name and holding the parchments and papers that multiply around a great estate.

There is, for instance, the Earl of Newbiggin, of Newbiggin Place, whose trusted adviser is Mr. Grainger. Without Grainger, the Earl dare not move a step. Grainger knows all about him and, seeing that this one client brings him in a cool thousand pounds a year, Grainger is ready to listen to a good deal more.

Now on the same Autumn morning that Adam Newman in London had discovered Mabel's young man to be a tobacconist's assistant, and not much of a one at that, the Elmsford High Street was enlivened by the appearance of a two-horse open carriage whose panels sported the well-known Newbiggin device. The Earl himself reposed upon its springy cushions, a fierce, dyed, padded and corseted old buck.

The carriage turned into Castle Street and magnificently stopped at Mr. Grainger's. Down sprang the footman; out stepped the Earl.

"GRAINGER in?" he barked at the awe-smitten clerk who received him.

But there was no need to bark, for here stood Grainger, deferent and respectful, as only a country lawyer knows how to be when standing in the presence of a thousand-pound client, and that client the Earl of Newbiggin.

The lawyer led the way into his private room, rubbing hands that would have been the better for real soap and water.

"We are on no account to be disturbed," he said to his satellite; and "Quite so—exactly," growled the Earl, moving forward heavily beside him.

"Now, Grainger," began the Earl, as soon as they were alone together and the door closed, "what do you make of this?" The nobleman had produced an envelope from his padded breast, and from the envelope he took a sheet of closely written note-paper. "It's from that young blackguard in London—he has the impudence to call himself my son."

"Lord Mallion?" inquired the lawyer meekly.

"Yes, I suppose my son's name would be Mallion. I was Lord Mallion till my father died and I succeeded."

"May I read it?" asked Grainger.

"That's why I've brought it," barked the Earl.

The lawyer fixed his glasses, picked up the letter and read it carefully from end to end. There was an interval of comparative silence, during which the Earl fidgeted with his wig, clicked his false teeth and tugged at his dyed whiskers.

"Well," he inquired at last, "well?"

"He says, my lord, that since you cut off his allowance and threw him over——"

"The young scoundrel! Of course I cut off supplies and kicked him out. Is there any piece of blackguardism that fellow hasn't committed? He'd be cooling his heels in jail if he hadn't had us behind him. He'll finish there now—you see if he doesn't!"

The lawyer listened sympathetically. He was in no hurry. When the Earl had done, he began again.

"He says, my lord, that since you broke with him he has had to work; that he was a taxicab driver till he lost his license—drunkenness, I suppose—they lose their licenses if they drive, er, rashly."

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"And quite right, too!" thundered the Earl.

" 'And now I'm a beastly tobacconist's assistant'—those are his words, not mine, my lord—'a beastly tobacconist's assistant, living like a pig in a cheap lodging and spending the whole blessed day behind the counter. I thought I'd better do that than starve, but I'm dashed if I keep it up any longer. So far, I've kept your name and mine out of it——' "

"He can do what he likes about his own name and about mine. He wasn't squeamish before; he used both for all they were worth!" interposed the Earl. "But you'll see what he's driving at."

The lawyer continued:

" 'If we can't come to terms, I'll do something disgraceful. I'll marry a slavey and she'll be Lady Mallion and the next Countess of Newbiggin. How would you like that? There's a little parlor-maid I got talking to in the Park the other day, as pretty as a picture and with the most taking ways. I've told her who I am, and she's off her nut in consequence. I never knew slavies were so romantic——' "

"That's his point—d'you see it?" bellowed the Earl. "Says he'll marry a servant-girl if I don't buy him off. Now what would you do—what would you do, Grainger?"

"Will you give me a day to think it over? He says he'll allow us a week, and that he's given notice at the tobacconist's. Will you leave the letter with me? I'll come out with an answer to-morrow morning."

"Just as you like, Grainger," replied the Earl; "but only a miracle can save us."

"It's my business to produce miracles," answered the lawyer with half a smile. It was the one liberty that he had permitted himself throughout that interview.

He escorted Lord Newbiggin to the waiting carriage, bowed deferentially and humbly and then, returning once more to his private office, beat a tattoo with his long lean fingers on the writing-table.

An hour later, when Elmsford was at its dinner and there was small chance of his being disturbed, the lawyer took a bundle of papers from an inner drawer of his safe and began to untie them.

"Adam Newman was the name," he whispered, under his breath. "Let's see what can be done with Adam Newman."

CHAPTER V

HADAM IS CONFRONTED WITH HARISTOCRACY

THE fruit-hawker, fresh from his alarming yet triumphal discoveries, had set about making up for lost time with a vengeance, and an hour later he was loaded up and sonorously at work again, crying his wares and disposing of them, chaffering with that mobile sex whose commerical instincts he understood so well, but whose finer and more spiritual impulses were altogether beyond him. He could, for instance, never understand the suffrage question and the noble disdain of public and private property wherein that movement found such eloquent expression.

"Smashin' shop-winders?" he would say. "If I had a winder an' one o' 'em come a-smashin' o't, I'd jolly well smash her!" And there was Mabel Pope, with her beautiful and romantic desire to marry a real live lord.

"Ain't one o' her own sort good enough?" he would ask, in those rebellious moments that assail the most generous of lovers.

But the desire to get things on the cheap —*that* he could understand; and the womanly fervor that rejoiced in a shrewd bargain.

"Seein' that it won't do me much harm an' that it'll make a new woman o' you, Mrs. Brown, I'll let you have 'em," was a formula he often employed with great success.

It made Mrs. Brown so pleased with herself that she ventured further and spent twice as much as she had set out to spend.

"It pays ter give in to 'em on the fruit if yer makes it up on the vegetables," was one of Adam Newman's maxims. Enough, however, of philosophy, and let us get back to hard and concrete fact.

The claims of business having been disposed of, Adam was ready for pleasure, and the chief ingredient of that pleasure would consist in giving Mabel Pope her eye-opener. Perhaps he would not be able to see her properly to-day, not long enough to denounce the impostor and fill in all the particulars. But he could, at least, press for an interview and get her to grant him some future hour of undisturbed revelations concerning her despicable admirer.

He reached the house hoping for the best, and with three heads of unsold cauliflower to serve as an excuse.

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There was no one in the garden, and the whole place had, indeed, an air of vacancy, which was presently explained when Mabel, answering his ring at the back door, announced that the family had gone to Brighton for the week-end, leaving Mrs. Green and her in charge.

"Mr. Hoswald's gone with them," she exclaimed, "an' they're comin' back o' Monday. It's a 'oliday for hus as well."

She was without her usual cap and apron and wore instead one of Miss Chittenden's painting-smocks.

"Do I look a hartis' like Miss Hagnes?" she cried. "I would do hif it weren't for my 'air. You've got ter do it plain and simple, wi' a partin' in the middle an' a big knot at the back."

She was in boisterous spirits and Adam thought her lovelier than ever.

"Would yer like ter see Miss Hagnes's painting-room?" she asked. "The other day she painted a young woman wi' only 'arf her clothes on! What d' yer say ter that?"

But Adam hadn't come all this way to discuss the nude in art.

"Look here, Mabel," he began, "I wants ter have a word wi' yer."

"Now doan' say that you loves me; because it's no good haskin'—I'm hengaged," was the astonishing reply.

Yet was it so astonishing when we consider Adam's previous visits and the undoubted symptoms he had given of his infatuation? Mabel knew all about it; of course she did.

"I heard as how you was engaged," he answered, swallowing, "an' it's becos I loves yer that I come ter give yer warnin'."

She moved away into Miss Chittenden's painting-room—it was not a studio, but only a room with a good north light.

Adam followed her, leaving his three heads of cauliflower in the passage.

"Cook's gone out, so you can speak hup," Mabel resumed. "You got somethink on yer mind?"

"Who is yer engaged to—wot's the feller's name?" he asked.

" 'E ain't no feller; 'e's a lord," responded Mabel proudly. "Same as yer reads of in the story-books. 'E's Lord Mallion, an' son o' the Hearl o' Newbiggin."

Adam, insead of being struck all of a heap by this announcement, as properly he should have been, merely remarked, "That's wot he tole yer."

" 'Oo says 'e isn't?" demanded Mabel Pope.

"*I* says so. He serves in a terbacco-shop an' he sleeps in a back street, an' when he ain't rigged up in his swell clothes he's a more common-lookin' bloke than wot I am. I'm not lyin' to yer; come out an' see. I'll drive yer. I got the address; it's on this here slip o' paper," and Adam produced the wrapping of the twopenny twist of shag, purchased that morning in the shop near the British Museum.

Mabel began to whimper.

"Didn't a gipsy as come to the back door tell me as 'ow I was goin' to marry a lord?" she asked. "I give 'er sixpence for to tell me fortune, an' a lord she sez it was ter be."

"She'd ha' made it a duke fer a shillin'," responded the unfeeling Adam.

"An' it isn't as tho' Hi doan' like yer, Mr. Newman—I likes yer better'n 'im. But a lord is a lord, say wot yer like——"

"Yer likes me better'n yer likes him?"

Adam had seized on these unguarded words, wrung from Mabel by the force of his vitality.

"Yer likes me, Mabel!" he cried, his pigeon-breast one blaze of fierce emotion. "No, yer not goin' ter take it back," as she stood off from him.

"Yes, I likes yer, Hadam," she answered at last; "I can't 'elp it—there's a somethink about yer that takes 'old o' me."

"I'll take hold o' yer," he ventured; and there and then he did, squeezing her little waist with his strong arm.

"Hif wot you's tole me's true an' hif 'e hain't a lord," she whispered.

"Let's drive away ter that terbacco-shop. Yer'll see fer yersel'."

"Wot about cook?" asked Mabel.

"Ain't she got a key or somethink?"

Mrs. Green had a key of the house, if she hadn't forgotten it and left it behind her as she often did. To clinch matters, however, that lady herself came in before Mabel was ready to be driven to the shop near the British Museum.

"I'll mind the house," said Mrs. Green. "Now don't you two be late. I'll sit up for you, Mabel; an' you, Mr. Newman, mind you brings her home safe. There was a second housemaid in my last place but one who went out drivin'—he was a cabman with his own cab, he was—a married man, too, with a grown up dorter an' all, an' so

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he oughter have known better—an' well, as I said at startin'——"

Mrs. Green had rambled on like this and worse for about ten minutes before she discovered that Mabel and Adam were gone and that there was no one listening to her story of the second housemaid.

IT IS a painful but illuminating fact that when Mabel saw she was expected to drive beside Adam in a common hawker's cart she flatly and resolutely declined, concluding with, "You ain't serious, Hadam? Haskin' me ter make an hexerbition o' myself!"

"W'y, I drives about in it all day," the simple fellow expostulated; "an' 'oo's ter know yer in the dark?"

"No young lady as respec's 'erself would be seen out in one o' them things—the hidea!"

Poor Adam gave in. It was his first lesson in the art of giving in; and he perceived vaguely that love and marriage meant a long and expensive course of similar tuition. He made haste to stow the offending horse and cart away in an adjacent mews and take an ordinary motor-bus with Mabel close beside him.

They sat on top and Adam put his arm round Mabel's waist and she leaned her head on his shoulder.

"'Oo's ter know us in all this lot?" she said. "Ho, Hadam, s'posing 'e *is* a lord!"

"Not he," answered Adam. "A terbacconist's man, I tells yer."

They were very happy together till it was time to get down and begin the serious business of the evening.

"Now, Mabel, you got ter go inside, an' I'll stan' in the doorway, case I'm wanted," he said, when they reached the shop.

Mabel peeped in and there, right enough, was her young aristocrat attending to a customer.

They waited till the customer departed.

"Ho, Halgernon," cried the wretched girl, advancing into the shop, "an' you told me as 'ow you was a lord!"

The young man gave a start—Adam could see him; and again the fellow's face reminded him of a face known very long ago.

"Mabel, by all that's holy!" responded Halgernon. "How did you find your way down here?"

Lord Mallion—for it was none other—had recovered himself. He waited calmly, imperturbably, with all the bland assurance of his caste and undeniable rascality—a little of each, or rather half and half.

"An' look at the clothes you's wearin'!" continued Mabel.

"They're good enough for this beastly shop," was all he answered.

"Tell me the truth!" she pressed him. "Hare you Lord Mallion?"

"The same and on his uppers. I've had a row with the Gov'nor and he's cut off supplies. I've had to take to this or die by slow starvation. I was so darned hungry when I got this job that I'd have pretty near taken anything."

Adam, in the doorway, was grinding his teeth at the fellow's assurance. He had, however, to admit that the explanation given was an explanation.

"Yer father cast yer hoff?" said Mabel, who was beginning to grasp the facts. "'E's quarreled with yer?"

"Quarreled isn't the word. The old fellow's raving."

"You give him cause ter rave, I lay—you give him cause!"

It was Adam, who had struck into the duet and made it a trio.

"Drop it, Adam!" said Mabel tartly. "It's no business o' yourn."

"You don't want no lord wot's fell out wi' his father."

"Who is the gentleman—a friend of yours?" Lord Mallion was addressing Mabel Pope.

"'E's a hinterferin' feller wot's tried to set me against yer. 'E brought me 'ere, an' 'e's bin spyin' on yer an' actin' most dishonorable."

Lord Mallion whistled.

"'E's a low 'awker wot come to me an' said as 'ow you was himposin' on me; 'e's——"

Mabel had cut it short; for there was now a something in Adam's face that recalled his fury in the garden when she had first set eyes upon him. He had looked like that when about to deal with the ex-governor of the island of Tobago.

"Don't 'it 'im, Hadam," she ended. "It ain't 'is fault."

"As long as yer don't go callin' names, Mabel," cried Adam, suddenly softened; "as long as yer don't go roundin' on me, I can stan' anythink."

"I'm sorry for you, Hadam," said the

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girl, relenting. "We're both sorry for you." Then, quite slowly and distinctly came the cruelest blow of all. "Lord Mallion 'll see me 'ome," she added, smiling very grandly. "Halgernon 'll see me 'ome; yer needn't wait."

Poor Adam! He stood there beaten to the ground. If Halgernon would only provoke him and give him something to punch till he was tired! But Halgernon was far too wise for that. Sullen, defeated, the hawker waited, then turned upon his heel and left the lordly couple to their own devices. It was all up with his dreams, his hopes, his longings. Love had come into his lonely life, only to fly out through the open window. Utterly despondent, he stepped into the nearest tavern and drowned the haunting vision in four-ale.

CHAPTER VI

MR. GRAINGER RUBS HIS HANDS PORTENTOUSLY

DOWN at sleepy Elmsford, Mr. Grainger had got to work. It was a ticklish clue and the evidences were slender. And maybe that awful old woman had disappeared, leaving no trace. She had thought herself dying, had felt her last hour upon her; they often made admissions under those circumstances. There was a man in Heathfield Workhouse who had admitted to a murder for which some poor devil had been hanged on circumstantial evidence sixteen years before. He had been abominably convincing; and all these years he had gone about with his atrocious secret, quite unsuspected and with the most excellent of reputations. A dear, simple old man, anybody would have said of him. A shocking and alarming old rascal, judged by these deathbed revelations; and he had died right enough, so there was no chance of getting even with him.

That awful old woman had recovered, and then she had denied everything. "I was only having a game with you," she had said, or words to that effect.

Dr. Winton of the Elmsford Infirmary had been with her, and a nurse. Winton had made notes of her story—the story that she had denied so heartily on recovery.

Grainger had these notes, and so far he had kept them from the knowledge of the Earl of Newbiggin. Where was the good? Even if the thing were true—which, possibly, it might be—there was no use in upsetting everything and everybody now, eighteen years afterward. And young Mallion, at that time, gave very little trouble and, on his father's death, would be a highly remunerative client. It was not Grainger's way to upset anybody who, at some future date, might prove a highly remunerative client.

Dr. Winton would say nothing, though he had told Grainger the story, more as a curiosity, one of the queer things that crop up in a medical man's practise, than as a story of any weight. The nurse had regarded it in the same light. This old woman had wanted to make their flesh creep—"give them a turn"—was the right expression. She had said as much when she got better.

The whole thing had passed away and was forgotten. Nurse and doctor had long ago dropped it from their minds. Perhaps, if they had known what he knew, they wouldn't have been so ready. To-day, apparently, there was only Mr. Grainger who had kept any written record, holding it in reserve, for what emergency he himself could hardly say. But he had that habit; and sometimes, his rubbish-heap would furnish forth a gem.

The reader will doubtless recollect how Mr. Grainger, on separating from his noble client the Earl of Newbiggin, had promised to turn up with a full-sized miracle early on the following day. Shortly after ten o'clock his carriage stopped under the great porch of Newbiggin Place, and a moment later he was shown into the library. Here the Earl joined him, padded, corseted, bewigged and presenting, at this hour of the morning, when his charms had scarcely had time to settle, a rather sickening spectacle. Even parasitic little Mr. Grainger could hardly suppress a disrespectful thought or two as his eyes took in that painful exhibition.

"WELL," barked the Earl, "admiring my looks, are you?"

Mr. Grainger replied that he thought his Lordship was looking uncommonly well.

"Sit down, Grainger, and let's attend to business."

The lawyer seated himself and crossed his little legs.

"Now tell me all about it," resumed the

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other cynically, "if you've anything to tell. We're floored, aren't we?"

"Not yet," piped Mr. Grainger, "not yet. I think we can make terms with Lord Mallion if you give me time."

"Make terms? I want to down him, to have him crawl in here like a whipped dog!"

"Exactly. And if you'll give me time and don't mind the cost of it——"

"I'm game up to a thousand."

"Then it's as good as done, if only I can collect the evidence I want. Does your Lordship mind my raking up things?"

"It depends on the things."

"Her late Ladyship's flight, for instance."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"It's painful to open up these old sores," pursued the lawyer, "but six weeks after Lord Mallion was born her Ladyship ran away, taking the infant with her. She urged your Lordship's cruelty and neglect as an excuse."

"And she wasn't far out, Grainger. I hadn't been very kind to her. We Newbiggins have never made good husbands. The blood's too warm."

"You sent me after her," resumed the lawyer. "She could stay away and keep on staying away for all you cared; but you wanted the heir back. You must have the baby—you insisted on that. Those, as near as I can recollect, were your instructions when you sent me after her Ladyship."

"You've an excellent memory, Grainger."

"A baby was sent back, the present Lord Mallion. We accepted him without question, didn't we?"

"He looked all right. I'm not much of a judge of babies—never was," remarked the Earl. "But what are you driving at?"

"The real heir was never returned—the *real heir*, your lordship. *That's* what I'm driving at;" and Mr. Grainger, having delivered his thunderbolt, was content to watch its devastating effect.

Lord Newbiggin sat for a long moment gathering his wits together.

"Am I to understand that Mallion's a stumer?" he asked at last.

"If by a 'stumer' your Lordship means a worthless check, I see the resemblance."

"But what evidence have you, Grainger, other than your bare word?"

The lawyer hesitated. He cleared his throat. These professional preliminaries over, he plunged at once into his story of the old woman in the Elmsford Infirmary and what she had confessed to Dr. Winton and the nurse when she had thought herself dying, and how she had withdrawn everything the moment she felt well again.

THE story took some time in telling. It was a long story, a story of many words. Lord Newbiggin was engrossed by it, foregoing even his normal habit of interruption. He listened, silent, attentive and alert.

"You've kept this from me all these years?" he asked, when it was over.

"I thought it best to let it drop—till it was wanted. It might never have been wanted. Things had gone their way for eighteen years when I first heard of it."

"Quite so," nodded the Earl. "I don't blame you. But what about Dr. Winton and the nurse?"

"Professional etiquette would keep their mouths shut; and besides, it would have been rather a dangerous story to repeat. I said as much to Winton."

"He had told you, though."

"And no one else. We are close friends and sometimes when he gets hold of a good thing he relies on my discretion. And he knew I was your Lordship's man of business. So perhaps it was a hint as well, in case I wanted to act on it."

"You saw this old woman?"

"Yes, once—after her recovery. I made it my business to see her. She stuck to her denial but, in any case, I frightened her so thoroughly that if she had kept to the first version I think she would have denied it when I'd done with her."

"She could have been severely punished for acting in collusion with my wife—was that the point you made?"

"Yes—and she seemed to know it. She could have been very severely punished, and would be still, if it were necessary. I put the fear of the law into her."

"Seven years ago you said it was? So probably she's still alive."

"I'll find her if you give me time and the authority to spend that thousand——"

"I'll give you both," barked the Earl.

"Well, in that case, the thing is as good as settled—as good as settled."

"And Mallion can marry his parlor-maid and be —— to him!"

The lawyer nodded gravely. It was not exactly how he would have put it himself—

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except within the privacy of his own family circle, with the servants all out of the room and everything quite comfortable.

CHAPTER VII

CERTAIN HOUSEWIVES DISCOURSE OF A MYSTERY

FOR six days Adam Newman had gone about, the most dejected of mankind and the most irritable. The ladies who dealt with him had cause to tremble. "Yer can take it or leave it," he would say, "I ain't a-running arter yer." He bullied them. The old geniality was gone; he shouted his price, and there was an end to it.

Naturally, some of his customers began to deal elsewhere. But the sentimental ones, who felt, and felt rightly, that he must be crossed in love, took no notice of his tantrums and rather increased their purchases.

"The poor fellow," they would say, discussing him over the garden-fence; "my husband's just like that when things go wrong with him. It's a girl that's upset him. You can see it is a girl." And, "*Cherchez la femme*," cried one, proud of her knowledge of life and of a foreign language. "I wouldn't fancy him myself, but then I've got a good man of my own."

Such, in effect, was the interpretation put upon Adam's conduct by many a fair dame who saw the sentimental side of things.

On the seventh day, however, there was no Adam Newman to interpret; nor on the eighth, which was a Sunday. On the ninth day he reappeared, smiling, himself again, and accompanied everywhere by a snub-nosed fellow whom he introduced as his successor.

"I'm getting out o' it," said he. "This is the gen'lman wot's steppin' into my shoes. He'll take yer orders an' do fer yer."

Never had they known him in such spirits.

"So it wasn't love; it was business that put him out so," ventured the cultured lady who had cried, "*Cherchez la femme.*" And then she added that it might be something of each; for you never know, she said, and it's only when a man's married and settled down that you can keep a steady eye on him.

And she didn't think much of the new hawker. He wasn't half so spry as the old one, and had they noticed his bandy legs? And now she must go in and turn out the best sitting-room, for if it didn't get done to-day it never would get done, and what with the children coming home for their dinner. . . . Phew! She was almost as bad as Mrs. Green.

BUT what had come over Adam Newman, and how was it that his despairing mood had turned so swiftly to one of joy? Mr. Grainger can answer that question better than anybody else, so let us see exactly what the little lawyer had done.

With a thousand pounds at his disposal, he had advertised freely and, additionally, he had called in the assistance of every public authority that might be of use. The old woman, Sarah Newman, was speedily unearthed, at Boughton Aluph, a village less than ten miles from Elmsford, where she lived by taking in washing and going out by the day. Threatened and reassured, browbeaten and coaxed, she had once more admitted that she had been engaged as a nurse by the late Countess of Newbiggin after that poor lady's flight, and that when the return of the little heir was demanded, her own child had been sent back in its place. Her baby was of the same age as young Lord Mallion. She had yielded to the pleadings of her mistress, and she had been paid a handsome price.

At the right moment, it was agreed, Lady Newbiggin would declare the truth and Sarah would do the same. The right moment, however, had never come, for her Ladyship had broken her neck in the hunting-field the very next Winter, and Sarah Newman, quite content to see her own child grow up as Lord Mallion, had retained the other till it became a burden. She had then abandoned it, leaving it to its fate.

It was no child of hers. Her own boy was well provided for, and this other one, known as Adam Newman, would have to shift for himself. He was close on fourteen years old at the time he was abandoned, and big enough to make a start.

Such had been Sarah's original confession, and to-day she repeated it. But what put the truth of the whole matter beyond a doubt was the production of a document whose existence had so far escaped the lawyer's knowledge. This was a precautionary paper which the late Countess of Newbiggin had had the prudence to draw up and sign in the presence of witnesses, one of whom was alive and readily accessible. It

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bore out every word of Sarah's statement, and Grainger had no doubt but that it would stand in law. The old woman had clung to it and withheld it all these years. Now, terrified by the lawyer's threats and questionings, she gave it up, and confessed that her late mistress had handed it to her, saying, "In case anything should happen to me, Sarah, you go to my lawyers with that."

Sarah had not gone. The interests of her own child had stood between her and her plain duty. She had looked after little Adam as long as she was able. To that extent, and to that extent only, had she kept faith with the woman who had trusted her.

NEXT to Sarah, it had been the lawyer's business to get hold of Adam Newman, and extensive advertising had discovered seven individuals answering to that name, of whom our hero was the seventh and last. Adam had proved a difficult and grasping customer, but he fitted the situation as a door-key fits a door, and, moreover, he had the famous Newbiggin pigeon-breast.

It was the pigeon-breast that settled it. The Earl's, as Grainger was well aware, reposed unostentatiously beneath a mass of padding. This fellow's went "naked and unashamed," adding the final and weightiest link to the chain of evidence that was to undo the spurious Lord Mallion.

The lawyer, at length, could now go proudly to his noble client and announce the full completion of his miracle.

He went. The Earl had stood the shock of it and consented to receive Adam, Sarah Newman and the woman's son—his own discarded heir—at Newbiggin Place. Some understanding was necessary, some rearrangement and, if the new heir were not too impossible, some present recognition.

So now we can guess what had come over Adam Newman and how it was that his despairing mood had turned so suddenly to one of joy.

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH, PERADVENTURE, THE HERO BEGINS TO LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER

DOES the reader wish to know more of Adam Newman's history? Lord Mallion he is now, though, in spite of Mabel's nagging, not a word will he hear of that title nor of any other.

As long as they were engaged, he didn't mind. But, once married, "Me, a lord!" he declared. "No, I ain't havin' any o' that; d' yer want all the people ter laugh at us?" And though she reminded him of what the gipsy had foretold, and foretold correctly, she could not shake this resolution.

"I'll be Adam Newbiggin instead o' Adam Newman," he insisted. "It's surprisin' how nigh they comes ter one another! An' you'll be Mrs. Newbiggin."

The Earl applauded this sensible conclusion and, meeting Adam's wishes, established the ex-hawker in a magnificent green-grocer's shop with plate-glass windows and separate counters for fruit and vegetables, telling him at the same time that he didn't care a brass farthing whether Adam made money or lost it.

He admired the lad; he admired his pluck, his spirit, his independence and even his unconventional use of the British tongue. Better a son like that than a vicious wastrel like the snub-nosed fellow who had been superseded! The Earl, too, it was who had immediately purchased Adam's horse and cart and connection at Adam's own price and turned the spurious heir adrift with them.

"That's all he's going to get and it's more than he deserves. He can take it or leave it, and sink or swim with it," barked the Earl. And the snub-nosed youth had perforce to accept these bitter terms. Nor did Lord Newbiggin oppose Adam's marriage with a servant-girl and, strangely enough, the same servant-girl.

"If the fellow had been to Eton and to Oxford like t'other one, I might object," he barked. "But she's the kind of wife he wants and he shall have her."

Adam's confrontation with Sarah Newman and their mutual recognition after a long moment's pause had solved one other problem. Here was the face that had so eluded him, that he had attempted vainly to recall as he followed in the tracks of Mabel's ignoble lover. The snub-nosed youth was the image of Sarah Newman; mother and son were as like as two split peas. Sarah, by the way, at Adam's request, has been given a small pension and now spends her declining days in modest comfort.

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AND the Newbiggin title—what of that? The succession to everything connected with the Earldom and estates is well assured. For when Mabel, a year later, presented her lord and master with twin boys, the elder and pigeon-breasted of these was handed over to the Earl with a view to bringing him up as the next Lord Newbiggin. The little fellow flourishes and promises well. And so does Adam, who every Christmas drives up with a hamper to the house behind the wall in St. John's Wood and pays a visit to the Chittendens. He is not too proud to remember that without their help, and especially that of the ex-governor of the island of Tobago, he would never have found the one woman—his beloved Mabel.

The Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes

A Sam Smilax Story by Barton Wood Currie

AN HOUR out of Hawthorne, Sam Smilax was striped and piebald with dust. His nearest living relative, if he had had any such, couldn't have recognized him without the aid of a microscope. There was alkali-powder in his eyes, in his nose and in his throat, and he felt about as sweetly disposed toward the world and the human race as a red ant.

Sam had hit the Stillwater trail on as mean a June day as the fiends that invented the southern Nevada climate and landscape turn out. Then the pony he'd hired from the Hawthorne Bon Ton Livery Company was peevish and fretful and resented being driven from home. Yet in view of all these aggravations of the flesh and the spirit, the very minute he laid eyes on Remsen Halliday Leaf he smiled a smile that cracked the dust-cake that hid his countenance.

It was his first glimpse of that gentleman, in all sacred or profane—especially profane—history.

He came up behind the vehicle in which

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R. H. Leaf, Esq., was the sole occupant at an easy canter, but he got a pretty good focus of the small human package in the linen duster and cork helmet before he drew up alongside. Likewise he got a good view of the large square trunk and the bulging portmanteau that surmounted the tailboard of the lopsided buckboard. A white umbrella which shaded the cork helmet and an enormous pair of rubber-rimmed spectacles completed the scenery that brought Sam Smilax back to a realization that the Nevada desert isn't such a horribly gloomy and grueling place after all. It only needed a near glimpse of the pair of ancient equine relics that feebly pulled the buckboard to make Sam show his teeth and actually laugh. As the weird-looking charioteer turned round and gave him both barrels of the bull's-eye specs, he laughed some more.

"Go ahead and laugh yourself to death," snapped the little driver of the buckboard, spitting out a mouthful of dust. "Anybody who can laugh on a day like this, on a trail like this, with a face like yours, and live to remember it, deserves to die smiling. Which is the funniest—me or the team?"

Sam Smilax pulled his laugh up short, settled his features back into the dust-mask and said:

"The team, I reckon, if you call it anything like that."

"I don't," snorted the little person, aiming his specs back at the animated bone-racks. "I've called 'em everything else I could think of or invent but horses. It's a crime and a shame for a human being to have to drive 'em. I've been making bets with myself for two hours that they'd die every minute, and if they were real horses they'd 'a' had a decent burial ten years ago."

"You must have been pretty hard up to hire 'em," remarks Sam, biting his lips.

"Hire 'em!" yelled the little man. "Hire 'em! Say, I may be somehow green to this lovely West of yours, but back along the shores of the Big Muddy and round about the Atlantic Seaboard I'm a live American business-man. I wouldn't hire a pair of short-haired lizards like this if I had to walk backward the rest of my days. I should say I didn't hire 'em—they were thrust on me!"

"Thrust on you?" says Sam, jumping up his eyebrows. "Why——"

"YESSIR, thrust on me," rips out the little cuss; "thrust on me by a pair of Nevada thugs who come up behind me and covered me before I could sneeze. If I hadn't had a spry little team I needed two hands to drive, it'd never happened. One of them shoves a pair of .38's in my face and the other has .45's he juggles criminal careless. The one with the .38's has a smile like a bobcat and a voice like a hoarse dog—a big black-whiskered brute with one white eyebrow. He says, as soon as he's done smilin',

" 'We're sorry, little stranger, but we don't like these animals we're riding and would like to make a trade. We're in a hurry to get to Stillwater on business.'

" 'That's just where I'm going—on business!' says I, and then adds, 'I ain't in the horse-business, so I guess there won't be any trade.'

" 'Oh yes there will,' says that big brute, 'and the sooner the quicker. So just drop them reins and shove up them lily-white little mitts o' yours perpendicular while my friend, Mr. Bucktooth Small, and I unhitch your team and hook up these thoroughbreds o' ours to the pole.'

"That's how it happened, young man, and——"

"Wait a minute," cut in Sam. "Did you say that one of that pair had a black beard and one white eyebrow?"

"That's the picture," shot back the peevish little person, "and add a pair of .38's."

"You knew they were .38's?" said Sam, trying to control his eagerness.

"Well, I should guess yes," returned the other. "Knew the caliber, the make and the year of vintage. That's my line—guns. I sell 'em. I'm a gun-drummer; name, Remsen Halliday Leaf, Rem for short. What make do you carry—'cause I got a better."

"Not carrying any this minute," Sam answers; "but I calculate to tote that pair of .38's the gentleman with the white eyebrow exhibited when he made the horse-trade."

The gun-drummer's team was limping along at a half-funeral trot and Sam was having trouble in holding back his live mount. The instant Rem Leaf scented an opportunity to do business, however, he heaved back on the reins and sat his bone-racks down on their haunches.

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"Stop a minute," he cried. "You don't want that pair of .38's or any other pair. The only up-to-date, civilized and worthwhile shooting implement of the century is the Single O. McGinty Automatic, pumps twelve slugs in a single stream or one at a time, *seriatim*, lies flat in the pocket, is dustproof, water-proof, rust-proof and——"

"Sorry," Sam checked him, "but I was sort of brought up on that pair of .38's I mentioned, and I'm on the trail of the man who stole them from the body of a stick-up man who borrowed them from a man who was keeping them for me. They——"

"But let me show you one of my Single O. McGintys," burst in Rem Leaf, flashing a pretty toy from the pocket of his duster. "Just look it over and try it on that chuck-awallah that's walking round that joshua-tree over there to the left."

Sam shook his head and waved back the proffered weapon.

"I've heard tell o' that brand o' toy pistol," he said, "or something close to similar. Dude Slaughter of Seven Troughs got all shot-up with one once, but he didn't know anything about it till the fellow who'd shot him came round and told him."

"Now you're talking child-talk," fumes Rem Leaf. "This little gun pumps a blunt-nose slug that goes home for the undertaker. Here's Missouri proof: See that jack-rabbit's ears sticking up back of that hummock? He's going to jump inside of three seconds and I'll lay you ten to one I wing him."

"Make it one hundred to ten," laughed Sam. "I hate piker bets."

"One hundred to ten she is," snaps the gun-drummer, and just then the rabbit jumped.

"Sput!" went the little automatic and Br'er Rabbit came down on his face and lay cold.

Sam Smilax opens his eyes four ways, hands over the money and says solemn:

"That's as good shooting as my dad ever taught me. Give me a peep at that pop-gun!"

Rem Leaf was smiling so tight his ears laid back and, as he handed out the flat little shooter, he said,

"Keep it, son—it's a present. I give a lot of these away on hundred-dollar bets, and if it's your purpose to derive back your shooting heirlooms from that low-down robber who snaked my ponies, you'll need it. When we get to Stillwater I'll get some more out of my trunk and you better stow 'em around your clothes. Generally, in these parts, I carry six."

"I reckon one'll be ample for me," says Sam, "and, as we're still two hours out of Stillwater, there's time for a little practise."

Before the shacks of Stillwater lifted their dull roofs out of the pink horizon, Sam and Rem Leaf were shooting even at moving and fixed marks, which, in several ways, is paying a high compliment to Sam's marksmanship, considering, of course, the style of ordnance in use.

II

"THEY call him the '*Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes*,'" Sad Sidney was whispering to Philander McPike, the camp undertaker, "and they say he is a bad-man, net. I sat in on one of his inquests when I was tending bar up in Soapweed Centre, Utah."

Sidney Gerald Van Deusen, Ganymede in ordinary of the O. K. Hotel, Stillwater, had sprawled over the counter so that he was almost talking in McPike's ear. His eyes were just as weepy as per usual and his long thin mourner's face flew its permanent signals of woe.

Undertaker McPike's round, genial countenance did not alter a jot as his eyes roamed down the bar and focused the face and figure of the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes. McPike's quick eye measured the man from boots to crown and from crown to boots, as if he were making a lightning calculation for professional reasons.

"H'm," he said, without looking back at Sad Sidney, "he'd take a man-size box. Who's that rat-faced party he's chinning with, Sidney?"

"Bucktooth Small, attorney at law," answers Sidney. "He practises over at Hawthorne and they say he's sharper than an eel's eyelash. He never lost a shooting-case yet."

"So this Idaho gent is that bad he has to take a lawyer along to defend his killing-cases?" sneered McPike. "He's what you might call a stylish murderer."

"Oh, I guess it ain't that," Sad Sidney retorts. "They came here about that Yellow Horse claim that young Englishman,

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Harold Salter, bought from Red Moran the day before Red went to the angels. I heard them tell Harold that Red had no right to sell, and the way that Coeur d'Alene bad-man went after him, it looked to me like a cold bluff. Harold Salter's got a reputation clear across the county for going into a faint if anybody mentions hardware to him. He's been bluffed out of three good mines, and now it looks ripe for him to lose the Yellow Horse just as it opens up picture-ore."

"Well, that's his own funeral," said Philander McPike, without sympathy. "He's got a fool tenderfoot's luck, and if he hasn't got spunk enough to back it up he ought to be shipped home to his folks."

With which cynical remark, Philander McPike went forth from the O. K. Hotel-bar to make the round of the camp doctors.

He had hardly passed out into the gathering dusk when a bell summoned Sad Sidney to the hotel-office to assume his combination rôle of clerk, porter and chambermaid, which he mingled with the occupation of mixer at the long counter in the absence of his boss, Black Riley.

Sam Smilax and Rem Leaf were the newly arrived guests and they desired the best available accommodations.

"Sorry, gents," said Sad Sidney, gloomily, "but there ain't a room vacant. Just let the last one three hours ago to a party from Idaho and Counselor Small of Hawthorne. On'y free bed in the house is the one Red Moran died in, and that's in Harold Salter's room—Number One on the left. If Harold is a friend of either of you, why I expect he'd be glad to have company. He was complaining this morning about sleeping alone on the ground floor."

"Sure he's a friend of mine if he's got a spare bed!" laughed Rem Leaf. "Lead me to him."

"He's in there now," spoke up Sad Sidney. "You can hear him walking the floor. He's got trouble on his mind. Knock gentle, 'cause he's awful nervous. If you gents want supper, the Home Grub Restaurant is across the way. If you got any luggage you got to fetch it in yourself—I'm too busy tendin' bar."

Sad Sidney disappeared to obey a clamorous summons, leaving Sam Smilax and the little gun-drummer out in the corridor, gazing at the door of ground-floor suite Number One.

"He said to knock gentle," said Rem Leaf to Sam, "so here goes a ladylike rap."

"Who's that?" called out a timid voice.

"Open the door and take a flash," said Rem Leaf. "It's a couple of late guests looking for a bed, and if you don't like us you needn't extend the hospitality of your suite."

The door opened on a crack and a pale face peered out into the corridor. Then the door swung wide and a nervous voice choked out, "Come in—thank God it isn't that other pair!"

III

SUITE NUMBER ONE was a nine-by-ten compartment containing two three-quarter beds, an agate-ware basin set in an iron tripod, a tin bucket, a small deal table, two chairs and two trunks. It was as much as young Sam and Rem Leaf could do to march in single file past a tall slim young man with a sandy mustache who held the door open with a trembling hand and then slammed it shut and turned the key.

"Sit down, sit down," he said hastily, "and excuse me for locking the door. I'm in such a blooming funk I don't know where I'm at."

He sat down heavily on a trunk and began breathing in short gasps. His agitation was such that both Rem Leaf and Sam Smilax were unable to make anything out of it, and they regarded him for a few moments in open-eyed wonder.

"I hope it ain't the willies?" Rem Leaf spoke up suddenly. "If it is, there's nothing better than a ten-mile run in double sweaters and then a pint of hot milk and sugar."

The young man smiled faintly and shook his head.

"I don't drink," he said, "and never have. That is, never enough to bother. I'd feel a whole lot better to-night if I got a bally stiff tide on. My stomach won't stand it though."

"Well, what is your trouble?" asked Rem Leaf bluntly. "If there's anything we can do, say the word. If you're going to accommodate us with a real bed in this new boom-camp, it's up to us to do a trick or two in your service in addition to paying the rates."

The agitated young man blinked his eyes

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and looked quickly from one to the other of his two visitors. He went to the door and listened.

"Turn the lamp down," he whispered, and then crept back to the table. Sweat was beading out on his forehead and on his thin freckled hands.

"Now listen," he said in a voice that was scarcely audible, as he gripped the table and bent over toward Sam Smilax and the little gun-drummer. "I'm about to be robbed of one of the best mines that have been opened up in this district. The only friend I had in this camp bought the mine two weeks before he died in that bed to the right, and he had the sale recorded in the county-clerk's office at Hawthorne. The day before he died he made out a bill of sale to me. Neither of us thought at the time to call in any witnesses.

"Now poor Moran is hardly buried before the Yellow Horse—that's the name of the mine—opens up a seven-inch vein of picture-ore, and news of the strike goes out over the desert on wings. A lawyer named Small, Bucktooth Small is the name he's known by, came over from Hawthorne to poke his nose into the affairs of my friend Moran. When I showed him my bill of sale he said it wasn't regular, but that he'd make it regular if I'd assign half the claim to him. I refused, and he threatened to fix me.

"This afternoon he came back with a man named Snark. Edward M. Snark is the name he gave me. He said Snark is a cousin, and the only living relative and blood-heir of Moran. They came into this room and said they'd give me till midnight to sign over that mine to them.

" 'We haven't time for a lawsuit,' said that man Snark, 'and there won't be any lawsuit unless it's brought by your heirs.'

" 'What do you mean?' I asked.

"They both laughed and the black-bearded one—that's Snark—took out two revolvers and said:

" 'Mr. Small is my lawyer, and these are my attorneys. Think it over!'

"Then they got up. At the door Bucktooth Small said, 'Mr. Salter, if you will inquire of Sad Sidney he will tell you that Mr. Snark is a man of his word, and that when he spoke about your heirs he meant it. We will give you till midnight, and if you don't make up your mind to turn Red Moran's mine over to his legal heir, there's liable to be an accident, and the coroner is an old friend of my family!'

"After they had gone out I sent for Sad Sidney and he told me that man Snark is known all over the West as the 'Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes.' He advised me to skip over to Hawthorne and get a lawyer of my own, but I can't go out of this hotel without those two men trailing me. Now I must confess it, gentlemen, that I'm a white-livered coward, and that the sight of a weapon of any sort, revolver or knife, turns me sick. I had no business coming out to this part of the world, but I got the gold-fever and can't shake it off. I tell you all this because I trust your faces; also because you are strangers. Somehow I haven't been able to make friends with any of the men in the camp. They seem to look on me as a joke."

He stopped and mopped the sweat from his face.

"You say this man Snark, this 'Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes,'" spoke up Rem Leaf, "has a black beard? Did you notice that he had a white eyebrow, too?"

"Yes," cried the young-man-afraid-of-hardware quickly, looking at the gun-drummer with startled eyes. "I t-t-trust," he stammered, "that he isn't a f-f-f-friend of yours."

"A friend!" exploded Rem Leaf. "Not on your hand-tinted tin-type. He's a dirty, low-down, cheap, swaggering bully of a horse-thief. As for being an Idaho terror, I'd be willing to gamble that he never killed a sober man in the open yet. He's one of these barroom bad-men who shoots into a crowd and then goes out and publicly notches his gun. Now don't you stand for any of his bluffs; don't you——"

"Just a minute," cut in Sam Smilax, who had been doing a lot of thinking, though not uttering a word. "I've got a suggestion to make. Will you give my friend and me a quarter interest in this mine if we defend your claim successfully? From what I know of these Esmeralda County lawyers, they'd charge you about fifty per cent. and hang the case up in court about five years. Now there's a little private matter I've got to settle with this white-eyebrowed person and if I can act for you in this mine-business it'll give me just the edge I want to start something.

"He may or may not be a cousin of your late friend Moran, but even if he isn't, you

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can't prove it without the aid of a lawyer. The way for you to do this thing is to sign over your mine to me, then draw up a partnership-paper in which we three take over this mine on shares—three shares to you and one share divided between me and Mr. Leaf, here."

"Great! Great!" cried Rem Leaf, jumping up and seizing the young Englishman by the hand and shaking it as if he designed to disconnect it at the elbow. "We're just the team of pals you need in your line. I haven't known my young friend here long, but I'll guarantee he can use hardware as if he cut his teeth on it. As for me I'm a gun-drummer and know the language of .38's, .44's and automatics. Also I'm so confounded small Bill Cody couldn't find me for a mark without the aid of a microscope."

Harold Salter looked from Sam to Rem Leaf, noted the sincerity stamped on their faces, the set of their jaws and the quality of fire in their eyes, and suddenly broke out in a beaming smile.

"I certainly am fortunate," he said, tremulously, "in having you gentlemen thrust upon me this way. If you can pull me out of this thing I'd be almost willing to give you a half-interest in the Yellow Horse. Before you came I considered the mine as good as gone. I only hope there won't be any bloodshed."

"Not if we can avoid it," said Sam Smilax, quietly. "I think this is a case I can take on with my hands."

"What's that?" blurted Rem Leaf.

"I guess you can back me up with all the hardware necessary," smiled Sam. "By the way, Mr.——"

"Salter, Harold Salter," supplied the owner of the Yellow Horse.

"Mr. Salter," pursued Sam, puckering his brows, "is that mine of yours near the camp?"

"About half a mile to the south," said Salter.

"And is there a one-room shack on the works?"

"Yes," said the young man, wonderingly.

"Good!" cried Sam. "Now you make out the papers to suit yourself, then look up this pair of claim-jumpers and make a date with them up at the mine for midnight. Tell them you've got all your papers up there. Arrange to accompany them to the shack. My gun-peddling friend and I will go up ahead. All you will have to do is open the door and let them in—then duck. Bring a couple of lanterns with you. Now let's get down to cases with the pen and ink and stop talking."

The gun-shy Mr. Salter lost no time in providing the writing utensils. His face was flushed, and he was as happily excited as a child. There was something in young Sam's grim and concise manner that won his complete confidence. Then the shrewd little gun-drummer with his finely trained commercial instincts proved an invaluable adviser in the swift execution of the bill of sale to Sam Smilax and the document reselling the Yellow Horse to the little partnership of three, papers that were one day to become famous as the beginning of the documentary history of the career of a bonanza king of Nevada.

IV

WHILE the little conspiracy was brewing in ground-floor suite Number One of the O. K. Hotel, the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes and his pilot-fish pal were having a pleasant little confab down at the end of Sad Sidney's bar. They didn't call on Sad Sidney for much in the liquid line, and they didn't mix with the groups that came and went on their night's pilgrimage, compounding their hilarity as they trekked from bar to bar. The little attorney with the projecting teeth and the razor-sharp features seemed to have an extensive acquaintance with the nondescript throng, but he refused all their offers to join them in a drink, and he made no effort to introduce his black-whiskered friend with the white eyebrow and the squinty black eyes.

Small's handy bad-man now and then broke out into a gusty chuckle as he listened to the attorney's oily talk, and occasionally he growled out a remark from the side of his mouth—which the gloomy-visaged Sad Sidney made desperate efforts to catch, but always failed. He remarked, however, that the two men took turns slipping out the door and then gliding back to the bar again at short intervals, and about an hour after he had ushered Rem Leaf and Sam Smilax to the threshold of Harold Salter's room he heard the big man say:

"Well, Small, ain't it about time to throw another scare into that lily-livered infant?"

"Wait till eleven o'clock, Ed," replies

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Small. "There's no use throwing him into such a fright he can't write his signature. He can't get away from us, the way we got the Eldorado stables covered. Walking out on the desert a black night like this is the same as committing suicide."

"I was only thinking," said the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes, "that it was pretty near time for that half-portion drummer we borrowed the ponies from to turn up and make a noise. I been thinking ever since we left him that I ought to have knocked him on the head. He was so confounded small, though, it'd been like murderin' a child."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about him, Ed," sneered the so-called counselor-at-law. "It's only his word against ours, and we're two to one. Then there's plenty of extra witnesses to be had in this camp at ten dollars a head. But, say, look who's here! He's bringing the Yellow Horse to us on a platter."

The Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes turned down just as Harold Salter entered from the street. He came hesitatingly toward the bar and said through chattering teeth:

"Well, Mr. Small, I've decided to compromise; but before we talk I would like a drink—Sidney, a long brandy and soda."

Attorney Small smiled and rubbed his hands with Quilpian unction, while the Idaho bad-man looked down on the nervous and fluttering young Englishman with a grin that caused his yellow teeth to shine through his furze of black whisker.

Sad Sidney brought the brandy and soda and Salter gulped it down with about as much relish as if it had been liquid fire. But the *aqua fortis* braced him *instanter*, and he was able to say steadily if faintly:

"I suppose you gentlemen are willing to talk compromise?"

"H'm, yes," replied Bucktooth Small, rubbing his chin, "but not until after you have signed over the Yellow Horse to my client. The time is pretty near up, so we had better adjourn to your room."

"I'm sorry," stammered the victim, playing a part now that made him rejoice inside, "but the papers are up in my office at the mine. I was so funked when you gentlemen first came to me that I forgot to mention that. We can drive up, if you wish or we can walk. It's only half a mile. Sidney will get us some lanterns. I suppose you wish to see the bill of sale, Mr. Small?"

"I should say I do," said Small sharply, crinkling his eyes and glowering at Salter. "But looky here, young man, how do you come to leave your papers up there? This looks suspicious to me. If you try any double-cross," he added under his breath, "there'll be blood spilled in the Salter family!"

Harold Salter turned so white his freckles stood out in bronze patches. He got himself together by an effort and said quickly:

"The papers are up at the mine. If you wish to remain here I'll go and fetch them. You may search me and my room if you wish."

"That sounds on the level," growled Snark, with a nod to Small. "Maybe it's better to fix that thing up there than down here. I guess he won't try any funny business lessen he wants to see—— break loose!"

"All right, then," snapped Small, "let's get the lanterns and be on our way. We can walk it in twenty minutes. No use bothering about a rig."

IT WAS one of those unusual black Nevada nights when the stars seem snuffed of their glory and the canopy of heaven gleams like dull ebony. The stark hills are mere blurs in the distance and anything in the nature of a trail is utterly obliterated to all whose senses are not trained for such groping amid shadows and over flinty surfaces.

That Rem Leaf and Sam Smilax found their way to the tiny cluster of shacks and the ghostly derrick-hoist that reared itself like a gibbet against the horizon was due to the elaborate instructions they had received from the young Englishman and to Sam's familiarity with paths trodden in the chaos-hewn Nevada soil.

When they reached the shack they lost no time in unfastening the one window which gave it light from the rear—when there was light. Sam crawled in and felt his way around the walls to assure himself that the scant furniture was just as described and that he had not stumbled on the wrong mine. The single room which the walls of the shack enclosed contained only chests of tools, a few chairs and a table.

Sam went round and round the room several times, bumping into things until his senses gleaned the exact position of every obstruction and gaged intervening distances. He seemed bent on learning how

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to navigate the interior of the cabin blindfold, and he had mastered the situation to his satisfaction before he returned to the window and whispered to his companion,

"I've got it pat, now. When I put the window down I'll knock out one of the little square panes so it'll look like it was broken by accident. All you got to do is to camp down there in that shadow till you hear me begin to talk large and high. When I hit the table with my fists, shoot out both lamps. Then come round to the door with your lantern and light her up."

"But won't you take one o' these automatics?" urged Rem Leaf.

"No," snapped Sam, "I might swallow it in the excitement!"

The closing of the window and the cracking of the little square of glass choked off the gun-drummer from further argument.

V

HAROLD SALTER'S brisk walk up the blind winding trail to the elusive shadows that marked the Yellow Horse mine was the most heroic experience of his timid career. The Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes supplied a line of conversation that bristled with horrors, conveying the impression to the shuddering young Englishman that a certain party named Snark was one of the chief instruments of the Angel of Death west of the Continental Divide. Now and then he would yank out one of his guns and threaten an imaginary foe with destruction by way of illustrating his shilling-shocker reminiscences. Occasionally he would poke the muzzle of the gun in Salter's ribs, or tickle him with the cold steel behind the ears, until at last the badgered young man stood glued in his tracks and swayed as if he were about to faint.

Bucktooth Small interfered at this juncture and said harshly:

"Cut that out, Ed, or we'll have a lunatic on our hands."

Several times before the trio ascended the hill which was crowned by the shacks and derrick of the Yellow Horse, the miserable Harold desperately resolved to break and run for it. Only the fear that he would be shot in the back checked him. As he drew near the main shack he called his office, and saw it standing bleak and desolate amid the drumming silences, a new fear came to him that his new-found friends had failed him.

When at last he reached for the padlock on the door he could not control his hands, and juggled the heavy lock about in a palsy of agitation. He had been carrying both lanterns until the shack was reached, when he handed them to the Idaho bad-man. His failure to open the padlock drew an oath from Bucktooth Small, who snatched the key from him and swiftly unfastened the door. As he flung it open Snark strode in. Small followed, holding the door open, and in the instant the pair relaxed their vigilance, Salter darted in desperate leaps around the corner of the cabin and fled off on the wings of dreadful fear.

BUCKTOOTH SMALL was on the point of rushing after the fugitive when a strange voice checked him, and he stood transfixed in the doorway.

Still holding the lanterns, which had at first penetrated the blackness of the shack's interior with an uncertain yellow glare, the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes had descried Sam Smilax with a start of uncertainty and unbelief, as if Sam were some phantom projected in a dream.

"Evening, gents!" was Sam's cordial greeting, flung out just in time to annihilate Bucktooth Small's impulse to pursue the fleeing Harold.

The bearded bully of the pair set down his lanterns in a flash and whisked out both his guns, which he waved in Sam's face, snarling as he did so:

"This is a plant, eh? Well, if it is it's a coroner's case. Stick up your mitts—high; that's right. Small, frisk him and collect his guns."

Sam flung up his arms at the instant of command and smiled into the muzzles of his own .38's and the frowsily bearded mug behind it. Bucktooth Small came hesitatingly forward, after fastening the door behind him, and went through Sam's hip-pockets. As Sam wore only a flannel shirt besides his trousers, and there was palpably no weapon on his person, the frisking stopped at the waistline.

"Well, as long as I'm not armed," said Sam, still smiling, "do you mind if I take my arms down? You're not afraid of an unarmed man, are you?"

"Let 'em down," growled Snark, "and sit down into that chair again. If you wig-

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gle a finger I'll fill you full of lead. Now what are you doin' here? Lie an' it's the last breath you'll ever pull."

"Why, you big stiff," said Sam easily, "I'm here because I'm here. It's my property, my mine, my shack. Why in the devil shouldn't I be here?"

The swiftness and astounding character of this utterance seemed to shoot both the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes and Bucktooth Small full of zero. They gazed at the utterly calm young man with dropped jaws. Suddenly Small gulped:

"What mine is this, we——"

"The Yellow Horse," said Sam, complacently.

"Then you lie—you lie!" roared Snark, brandishing his guns. "I'll give you eight seconds to eat your words or say your prayers."

"Would you like to see the bill of sale?" Sam came back, in a smooth drawl, unbuttoning his shirt and pulling out a sheet of foolscap, which he flung on the table. As he did this he moved his chair to one side to get out of line with the window.

Snark seized the document, still covering Sam with one gun.

"Bring the lanterns up here on the table," he hissed at Small, who was glancing about furtively and flying signals of panic.

Small obeyed mechanically and mechanically read the paper which Snark thrust into his hands.

"It's a fake, ain't it?" snorted Snark. "Who's signature is it?"

"It reads Harold Salter," faltered Small.

"Notice that it's a copy?" said Sam, still smiling. "The original is tucked away in the safe of the O. K. Hotel."

Bucktooth Small read the document again and then whispered in his pal's ear. What he said seemed to make a new man of the bewildered Idaho bad-man.

"Haw! Haw!" he guffawed, as he twirled his weapon on his thumb and looked down at Sam. "This is a good joke. You're just the man we wanted to see. My lawyer here has got a bill of sale, transferring this mine to me from Harold Salter. We'll just rub out his name and write in yours. Then you can sign or take a free pass to the angels. What's the young gentleman's name, Small?"

"Smilax—Sam Smilax," read the attorney, bending down to the lamp and then straightening up again.

"The same name as on the plate of that gun you stole from a dead man's clothes!" cried Sam, jumping up and bringing his fist down on the table.

VI

"PFUT! Pfut!" came two almost simultaneous muffled cracks from the rear window, and the globes of both lanterns exploded and plunged the room into pitchy darkness.

It had undoubtedly escaped the attention of the ferret-eyed Bucktooth Small and his strong-arm, bull-snorting companion that when Sam Smilax cast his hands aloft he stood up in his socks a little less than six feet of tiger brawn and sinew laid over as husky a skeleton of the genus *homo* as they build in the strenuous out-of-doors of the free and boundless West.

Had that sure-thing partnership taken note of this fact, it might have accounted to them for the strange and portentous happenings immediately subsequent to the snuffing out of the two lanterns. Small was a dozen feet from where Sam Smilax had sprung up from his chair when the Single O. McGinty automatics spat two tiny gashes of flame through the rear window and drenched the room with utter blackness, yet the little attorney, with every sense galvanized into alertness, was utterly unconscious of Sam's swift catlike approach until he was suddenly seized about the waist and hurled through the air like an unwieldy clod.

It was this two-legged and two-armed and palpitating body of flesh that crashed against the broad and bulging chest of the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes, and which bore him down flat on his back and jarred from his grip a pair of .38's. Sam had planned his climax in inches and fractions of a second and had executed it with splendid precision.

The shock of Mr. Snark's fall rather numbed his intellect, and for several long minutes his mental processes were the primal impulses of a dull and savage animal. He conceived that S. Smilax had leaped upon him and borne him down and he fought that enemy with all the brute that was in him, hammering and grinding and sometimes biting.

Nor was it an unresisting enemy he thus assailed. Insignificant and frail as Bucktooth Small appeared, coward though he was

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at heart, there burned somewhere within him the desperate courage of a rat. Moreover what little bone and flesh there was of him was hard as nails. I have mentioned his prominent teeth, which were very hard and strong and sharp, set in a jaw that could work like a bear-trap.

He was quick-witted enough to realize during the infinitesimal period of his transit through the air that he had been caught up and hurled by that strangely calm young man who had so suddenly and mysteriously come to the succor of the mollycoddle owner of the Yellow Horse. As he went sprawling down on the floor, entangled with his partner and instrument, Snark, he strove with what little gasping breath he had to reveal his identity. He abandoned the effort after he had been hammered in the face several times and felt that his right arm was being ground out of the socket. That law of self-preservation, which is potent in all of us and more potent in some, flamed high and hot in the meager carcass of Bucktooth Small and he fought tremendously.

REM LEAF had darted round to the front of the shack and was striving vainly to light his lantern when the door opened noiselessly and Sam Smilax stepped out. The momentary flicker of a match was all that saved Sam from the contents of one of the gun-drummer's deadly little automatics. As the flare of the match died, Sam closed the door softly and whispered,

"Never mind the lantern. Go find that man Salter and bring him here."

"——! I thought they were tearing you to pieces!" gasped Rem Leaf. "They're murderin' each other, ain't they?"

"Never mind that," Sam retorted. "Go and get Salter. You see I've got my .38's back. All I had to do was pick them up off the floor after I threw the two gentlemen inside into a clinch. Leave the matches—I'll light the lantern and go in and play peacemaker. My, but that's some battle in there! Hear that big bad-man squeal! I reckon it's time to stop it, so be on your way. Get your team of real horses out of the stable and drive Salter up here. I told him to go down to the hotel and wait in his room."

"He went that way," said Rem Leaf, as he scrambled up from where he had been kneeling to light the lantern. "He wasn't touchin' ground as he passed me round the corner of the shack. Here's the matches," and the gun-drummer sped off down the trail.

The battle within the shack had lost some of its volcanic force by the time Sam Smilax had lighted his lantern, opened the door and stepped in. With one hand he held the lantern up so that its rays fell upon the writhing mass on the floor, while the other hand fondly caressed the hilt of one of his recovered .38's.

"Get up," he said sharply, and the struggling mass dissolved itself into two miserable semblances of men, who crawled back from the rays of the lantern and the threatening revolver like startled vermin.

"Get up," repeated Sam. "Crawl into those chairs and sit tight." That was all either of the pair was able to do—crawl.

Twice the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes fell from his chair and then desperately struggled up again, mumbling in a craven voice, "Don't shoot. Don't! Don't——"

There was scarcely a whole shred of clothing left on their bodies, and the beard of the Terror of the Coeur d'Alenes had been removed by handfuls, not to mention a fragment of ear. Bucktooth Small had had a broken nose added to the salient features of his countenance, and there wasn't an inch of his body that wasn't contused and lacerated.

He was a pitiable object as he clung to his chair and whimpered for mercy. All his lawyer's cunning and mental acumen had been battered out of him and, as in the case of Snark, the supposition filled his brain that Sam had been fighting them both at once, with superhuman strength, only to emerge from the strife as fresh and unruffled as when he entered it!

"You're a pair of dirty yellow dogs," said Sam, turning from them in disgust. "I'm going outdoors to breathe some fresh air, and don't you move off those chairs till I give the word, or some lead will come sifting through your systems."

"We won't; we won't," they moaned and Sam left them.

LEANING against a boulder outside the shack, Sam waited for the return of his friend the gun-drummer, and not many minutes passed before he heard the clatter of hoofs on the trail below. As Rem Leaf pulled up the team,

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Sam was puzzled to see that there was only one occupant of the buckboard.

"Where's Salter?" he asked, as the gun-drummer stepped down.

"Can't exactly figure it out in miles," replied Rem, somberly, "but Sad Sidney's estimate is that he makes Hawthorne by dawn and Reno by sunset. He left Stillwater on a special express-stage—a special one!—with all his trunks! He gave Sad Sidney the address of his folks in England where we're to send him his share of the earnings from the Yellow Horse if we happen to survive the night and continue the enterprise. But, say, Sam, what about the two that ——"

"Go and take a look," said Sam, "and ask them if it'll be agreeable for them to leave Stillwater to-morrow, that is, to-day. Tell 'em if they're in a hurry they can have this team and start now."

The gun-drummer was gone a few moments and then called out from the door way:

"They say, Sam, that they'd like to get away a little quicker than now, but if that can't be arranged they'll start now!"

BY WAY of preface it should be sufficient for me to point out that on occasion Sergeant Hibbert honors me, who am unworthy, with his confidences. In this I take much pride. This is also my sole apology for what follows, as Sergeant Hibbert is a great man and much respected by those that walk in high places.

It was a newspaper-account of the presentation of colors to a regiment that led Sergeant Hibbert to describe what he called the "little affair at Neumayerspruit."

"It stands to reason," he said slowly, "there never was a rottener arrangement. In olden times when a regiment went to war—not so very long ago either—the colors went too as a matter o' course. And every time the regiment was under fire the colors was under fire too. See! What 'appens nowadays? The colors is left behind. Oh, no! We mustn't take *them*. Leave 'em be'ind with the drums that are too young to go.

"Now in South Africa there was a lot occurred that shouldn't 'ave: white flags and such like. Why was that, eh? Well, sir, listen to me. They should 'ave 'ad the colors. That's *my* theory. Surrenderin' with colors is a very different thing to surrenderin' without.

"Of course there aren't many fellers who'll 'ang on to the very last an' let themselves be killed when they know it's 'opeless tryin'

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to fight. Yes sir, it's precious 'ard to keep from 'oistin' the white flag when you're surrounded an' the bullets are droppin' men on every side an' you're certain that at the most you've only got about ten more minutes to live. Precious 'ard it is. A man wants something to fight for then, an' that's the time when 'e ought to 'ave the colors.

"Now, f'r instance, I was in one little scrap myself that—well, it didn't get into the papers an'—yes, we'd a white flag there, too."

Sergeant Hibbert broke off and took out a pocket-knife.

"Pipe's foul," he remarked and began to scrape out the bowl with maddening care.

"I dare say it is," I said, "but you won't need it just at present. You go ahead and tell me about the little scrap that didn't get into the papers."

For some minutes Sergeant Hibbert gazed through the open window at the sun-lit barrack-square, with his forehead puckered into a frown and his lower lip thrust forward, but at last, when I had almost given up hope, he turned and told me his story:

I DON'T suppose that any one could ever 'ave been less fitted for the army than Mr. Carstairs—Lieutenant Carstairs of our regiment. 'Eaven only knows why 'e wanted to be a soldier. I've often wondered. It was 'is folks made 'im, prob'ly. 'E joined us in the Summer of '99 from a militia regiment an' per'aps if 'e'd passed through Sandhurst 'e'd 'ave been a little different from what 'e was. 'E was tall an' heavily built an' not quite so straight in the back as one would 'ave liked to see, with a big nose and a pale face and a surly way of speakin' and a manner that set people against 'im from the start. 'E didn't ride, 'e didn't shoot, 'e didn't play any games, didn't know the difference between sand-crack or bone-spavin—that's M. I.—and the splice of a cricket-bat. Also 'e'd ignorance enough an' side enough to furnish a company of Guards, an' leave a bit over for a colonel of Imperial Yeomanry.

A secret in the Officers' Mess is common property next day in the Canteen, of course. So there wasn't much that Mr. Carstairs said or did that *we* wasn't told. We 'eard that 'e actually criticized the Regiment's marchin' one night, an' afterward talked to the Adjutant about the inefficiency of the N.-C. O's on parade. And 'e a newly joined second-lieutenant! No sir, 'e brought the trouble on 'imself. It was 'is own fault an' no one else's.

Any'ow, before long one thing led to another an' there was a subalterns' court martial, private an' secluded, an' Mr. Carstairs, separated from 'is garments, spent a night out-of-doors, lyin' on 'is fat white back, pegged 'and an' foot.

Might have killed 'im? Oh, yes, so it might. But then, it didn't. It made 'im keep 'is mouth shut and 'is chin up. It made 'im leave off bullyraggin' the men, which 'e thought showed 'is power 'o command, and it made 'im keep a civil tongue in 'is 'ead when 'e spoke to sergeants who'd been in the army before 'e was out of pinafores.

Awful cruel, the British Army, isn't it? Prob'ly 'e would 'ave left the Regiment. 'E wasn't wanted! But we went off to the war soon after, and Mr. Carstairs, very green and flabby, but a bit more sensible, went too.

NOW, leavin' out many interestin' an' unbelievable things, most of which you 'ave heard before, some of our fellers were cut off with a column and were taken prisoners, comin' back a few days later in their shirts and not much else. Mr. Carstairs 'appened to 'ave been captured along with the rest, an' what's more 'e didn't take much pains to 'ide 'is relief when it was all over. From all accounts the white flag didn't go up any too soon for 'im. An' that kind of thing doesn't do an officer —or a private even—any good.

Well, to'rds the end of the war, regiments was broken up an' scattered from one end of the globe to the other, some detachments bein' lost sight of for months. So in the Winter—our Summer—of '01, while our mounted infantry were seein' life from Vryburg and Potchefstroom as far as Carolina and down to Bethlehem, teachin' the cavalry *their* job, some of us was on the tramp with ox-wagons, an' others again were garrisoning stations an' block'ouses an' little villages.

See!

It all arose roughly through old man Louis—Louis Botha, y'know; Prime Minister now of the Union of South Africa 'e is—thinkin' 'e'd rouse things up a bit in Natal, just by way of keeping 'is 'and in.

September meant the end of Winter, so

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old man Botha comes down, pretty expeditious, from somewhere up Ermelo way, a part I 'appen to be acquainted with, picking up commandos all over the place. 'E jogged along towards Utrecht in the rain, picks up a couple or so of guns at Blood River and invades Zululand.

There 'e fights, gets a licking an' turns back, capturin' a convoy or so, *en route*, an' is surrounded most complete. Lord bless 'im! 'E never worried over a thing like that! 'E just dodges through, divides 'is forces and goes north, quick.

NOW just about this time the remains of a company of ours was moved up into the district to garrison a tiny little last-spot-on-earth place in the 'ills, called Uitspanspruit. Between the Pongola and Assegai. An' we 'adn't been there a week when news come along that we were to escort a convoy of three wagons to another God-forsaken 'ole called Brandwachtfontein. There being no mounted men 'andy, Mr. Carstairs was told off with myself an' eighteen men, to take the wagons there, an' fetch 'em back.

Mr. Carstairs had grown rather subdued in the past six or seven months, but 'e was still the most un'andiest officer I *ever* met—and the most unpopular.

I can see 'im now, the mornin' we started, before break of day, listenin' to old 'Atfield—the Captain of our company—who was tellin' 'im exactly what 'e must *not* do. "But," says the Captain grinnin', "if you *should* see any Boers, there's no objection to your fightin' 'em."

An' 'e laughed, well knowin' there were no Boers near Uitspanspruit, and off we went.

It was 'eavy work and the old wagons creaked an' groaned, an' we moved slowly through the mud, with an advance-guard an' rear-guard spread out according to the drill-book an' Mr. Carstairs stalking along as if 'e wasn't aware of our bein' in existence.

We were going through a rough kind of a country, too; awful rough. Big bare 'ills all round, an' rocks an' dips an' such like, curving in and out all over the place. Times, we'd get patches of thorn-bush, an' then a bit of a spruit going down to one of the rivers near, an' big bunches of forest in the kloofs stretching up to the 'ills, an' precipices an' swamps. That was the country in which we was fooling about under Mr. Carstairs.

Long about midday we reached a hollow, and the wagons stuck in the mud every few yards. We 'ad to 'aul them through some-'ow, of course; and even the advance-guard, Dickie Croly an' Buffer Simpson, 'ad to come back an' 'elp. Mr. Carstairs, 'owever, just stood an' looked on kind of gloomy while we 'eaved.

"Now then, you men," says 'e, "put your backs into it."

An' from the far side of the wagon, Buffer speaks up:

"'E's delicate," says 'e; "'is mother says 'e ain't to do no 'ard work so's to spoil 'is figure."

Rotten discipline, of course, but Buffer, who come from Battersea, 'e didn't mind, and I didn't feel like interferin'.

Mr. Carstairs went all sorts of pinkish colors, one after the other.

"I don't want any of your insolence!" says 'e.

That was all.

An' that was the feller who was supposed to be in command of us! Think of it!

Five minutes after we got under way again, the second wagon gives a kind of lurch, and the off 'ind-wheel comes off with a crack. Spokes smashed to smithereens. The third wagon pulls up, but the first trots along till I yells to the boy to stop, which 'e does about fifty yards on.

Well, there were we, stranded 'arf-way between Uitspanspruit and Brandwachtfontein. Good enough, eh? In the middle of as wicked a country as you'd want to see. Sloppy an' miserable, and like to start raining any minute. We crowded round an' waited for Mr. Carstairs to speak or do something, but not 'im. 'E just opened 'is codfish eyes a bit wider and stared at the wagon, as 'elpless a man as ever I saw.

YES, there were we, like that. I 'ad just turned and was going to ask Mr. Carstairs what 'e proposed to do, when from the thick bush on both sides of the road, came a regular 'urricane of bullets. Yes, before we'd even time to breathe or think, we were in the midst of it; a regular 'urricane.

'Ow's that for a muck-up? Mr. Carstairs, 'e spun round, frightened.

"Oh! My God!" says 'e, 'is teeth clickin' like a telegraph.

"Get down," I says, falling flat; "get down, you fool!"

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'E just stood there, dazed and silly, sayin', "My God! What shall I do?"

I dunno' what would 'ave 'appened if Dick Croly 'adn't given 'im a smack on the back of 'is knees. 'E was that tottery 'e came down with a run.

The leading wagon started off full gallop, an' the boy pitched out, with a bullet in 'im, under the wheels. The mules took charge then, and made off straight along the road. The beasts behind us, they swung round an' dashed off the track. First thing we knew, the wagon swerved sideways into a rock, the pole and splinter-bar smashed, and it overturned with the top-side wheels spinnin' in the air. The animals made for the slope, but two fell and the rest got mixed, jumbled up in their traces, and were shot, I suppose.

I 'adn't much chance to look; only saw what was goin' on in side-glimpses like, while we were tryin' to straighten things out a bit.

The mules of the broken wagon were killed, first go-off almost. Just as well too, as they were kickin' the stuffin's out of each other and us.

There was three big gray boulders with thorn between them at the side of the track, one wagon on its side, the other 'arf over, and eight dead mules. And the bullets all this time were whangin' by us, like bees swarmin' on an apple-tree.

I tell you, sir, I didn't like it. No, nor nobody either. As for Mr. Carstairs, 'e sat on the ground in the lee of the wagon, shivering and sayin' out loud: "What shall I do? Oh, my God! what shall I do?" Over an' over again.

There were twenty of us—not that Mr. Carstairs counted for much—and the two Kaffir boys, all 'uddled up in a sort of circle, while the *crick-crack* went on all round. We fired back of course, some be'ind the rocks, others be'ind the wagons and others again over the mules. It was more for something to do though than for any real use, as we 'ardly saw a Boger the whole time. In less than two ticks two fellers 'ad been crumpled up, killed before they could fire a shot; also one of the niggers was rolling over and over, shrieking.

"It looks as if we were going to be dished up," says Dick Croly, sprawlin' on 'is stomach behind 'arf a rock and a bunch o' thorn.

"Yes," says I, "it does."

And 'strewth, it did, too! I tell you, I felt that no one but a born idiot would 'ave given me anythin' much for my passage 'ome again at that moment.

On top of everything the rain came down steady, and in less than no time we were lyin' about in three inches o' squashy mud. It was awful, just awful. . . . . Wet and cold, and miserable.

The Bogers were aimin' careful. Those poor old mules got it, dead or not. A bullet 'll drive through a mule, most times, at that range. And it'll drive through a thorn bush every time, as Dick Croly found pretty soon. 'Is right shoulder was put out of action. Then Mr. Carstairs gave a sort of little yelp, and I saw 'im, from the corner of my eye, crawl a few yards an' pick up a rifle. 'E started to fire, straight away, just as if 'e'd suddenly remembered we were in a 'orrible fix and 'e ought to be doing some thing. 'E didn't aim, just crouched in a 'eap, pulling the trigger, kind of bewildered.

One of our fellows, Gibson by name, leans over and jogs 'im by the elbow soon as 'e saw a chance.

"Your back-sight," 'e says, quite short. "You won't 'it anything like that, 'cept us."

Mister Carstairs groans, and Gibson fixes it for 'im. "Now," says 'e, "you shoot as if you meant it. Only," 'e says, "if you're goin' off your chump, put the blarsted rifle down!"

There's not much to tell about that fight really. It didn't last long. We lay there with the fear of death on us, unable to move, and was picked off one by one. The Bogers 'ad us all right. Oh! they 'ad us, a clear cop, they knew it, an' were shootin' as if they meant to get it over quick. Nipper Swayne got a bullet through 'is body quite early, an' lay on 'is back 'elpless, paralyzed, just givin' a little 'eave now an' again. We couldn't do anything for 'im though, an' 'e went off fast. Next time I looked at 'im, 'e was dead.

OH, YES, it was nasty. I don't like to think of it very much; the wagons gettin' splintered an' chipped, an' our little bit of ground like a red swamp, mud and blood, with the rain 'issing down as fast as ever. Out o' the original twenty, ten were dead or near that way; and some'ow they seemed all as if they were alive, yet very 'orrible, I dunno' why. The rain and the mud, I suppose.

Young 'Olloway was shot through the fore'ead. 'E got up off 'is knees slowly.

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Then 'e threw 'is arms up an' fell back, an' 'is rifle pitched on Mr. Carstairs; caught 'im on the side of 'is face. "—— you!" says Mr. Carstairs, kind of sulky, "don't chuck your rifle about," never looking to see what 'ad 'appened.

Fact, sir. And Clayton went over too, rolled over on to 'is side an' just bled.

I was dead sick of it, I tell you. Too sick and tired to be worried about when *I* should go. I didn't think of my past or my future, or anything, just felt miserable an' wet an' cold. They'd got us fast. Everybody was thinkin' the same. I looked round, an' saw what was in their minds. Gibson shouts to me over poor old Croly, who'd been finished off tryin' to fire from 'is left shoulder.

"Hi!" says Gibson, "it's no good, is it?"

"Not a 'aporth," I says.

We'd forgotten all the bloomin' talk about never givin' in, an' all that guff. But it wasn't the being shot some'ow, it was the being shot an' knowin' all the time that it was just useless. Once we'd settled it, we just lay there on our bellies in the rain, an' cursed Gibson for not 'urrying. 'E unbuckles 'is belt and slings it off 'im, an' undoes 'is rolled blanket.

"This 'ere," 'e says, "will do," lugging out a towel. We watched 'im proppin' 'imself on one elbow, tying it on to 'is rifle.

"Right!" I says, "an' 'ere ends our little show, an' they can 'ave the putrid wagons," says I.

Now, sir, so far it was quite simple. We were getting killed off fast, an' we'd just about 'ad enough of it—just *about*. But 'ere comes the perplexin' part of the whole show. Just as Gibson is goin' to 'oist 'is rifle, Mr. Carstairs wakes up, sort of, 'is teeth chatterin', an' 'e blinkin'.

"You put that down," says 'e to Gibson, speakin' in a voice that was new to us.

Gibson puts it down, surprised, and looks round.

"What's up?" says 'e. "Woken up, 'ave you?" 'e says. "Well, I dunno' what *you* think, but *we've* 'ad quite sufficient."

We all of us were starin' at 'im, crouching down, while the bullets whizzed over us and round us and through us just the same. Mr. Carstairs grunts and says 'e: "You're not goin' to put that thing up."

That was a bit of a shock, wasn't it? What were we to do after that?

We fired a few rounds, an' another man flops all of a 'eap, an' *'e* was bad, I tell you. Sometimes a chap can't 'elp it, but 'e knows 'e oughtn't to, an' that seems to make it 'arder for everybody. Any'ow, that settled it—'im cryin', I mean.

"I'm finished with this," says Gibson; but before he can put up the white flag, bang comes Mr. Carstairs with 'is rifle on Gibson's 'ead.

"Lie down," 'e says. "I'm in command 'ere. This Regiment does not surrender, just you remember that," says 'e.

"*We're* goin' to, all the same," sings out some one from the other side. "Don't you interfere, or——"

"I'm in command," says Mr. Carstairs slowly, as if thinkin'; "I'm in command, an' the first man that raises that rag I'll shoot."

"You do," says Buffer Simpson, "an' I'll blarsted well shoot *you!*"

A fact, sir. Buffer actually lifts 'is rifle, but as 'e does so, a bullet catches 'im in the throat an' 'e lays back quite still across one of the others. Kind of sobered everybody.

"NOW," says Mr. Carstairs, wipin' 'is lips, "I mean what I say. Any more of you fools want to talk?"

We *didn't*. What with the bullets an' the pourin' rain, an' the slush and coldness of it all, an' that feller with a loaded rifle in 'is 'ands, ready to out any one that tried to argue, we felt that all we could do was to keep on firin' an' wait for something to happen.

"Look 'ere, Mr. Carstairs," I says, after another ten minutes, "what is the sense of this? 'Ere's six of us left able to shoot, an' we've probably not 'it one of them," says I. "Why can't we give in? It's murder an' nothin' else to keep us 'ere."

"You shut up, sergeant," says Mr. Carstairs, *'e'd* been wounded too, by this time, and 'is left arm 'ung limp. "Per'aps," 'e says, "it will set your mind at rest if I say that I don't quite know what's 'appening. One thing I *do* know, 'owever, an' that is, you're either goin' to be killed by the Boers or by me."

"'Ave we any chance, you scarecrow?" says Gibson, still achin' from the bash on 'is 'ead. I remember we'd some'ow dropped all idea of "mistering" or "sirring" by this time.

"We have *not*," says Mr. Carstairs. "For once in your miserable existence you're right," 'e says. "You're booked for an' other world, my man, an' if you're lookin-forward to it as little as I am, it

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won't be much of a place we're goin' to."

Then conversation languished, an' we lay still shiverin'.

The Bogers didn't try an' rush us. Not worth it. They were creepin' a bit nearer in the bush, stickin' to their targets, dottin' 'em all round the bull, sort of. One feller was 'ard at it tryin' to get me. I 'ad about three through my blanket and a couple in my canteen—all 'e could see of me, I suppose.

Gibson was the next to go, damnin' Mr. Carstairs steady as 'e died, an' Freddie Price went crazy. Jumped on a rock yellin', an' tumbles back an' 'arf kills a chap who was dyin' peaceful an' easy. "Get off," says 'e, "oh! *do* get off, Freddie. *Can't* you take 'im off?"

Of course we couldn't, so there we left 'im.

"Now," says I, "'ow do you propose to end this Mr. Carstairs? Why can't we give in an' 'ave done with it? There's only four of us now."

"Look 'ere," he says, "I've told you often enough. If either of you three asks again you'll be killed by me!"

"'Ow about the wounded?" I asks, shivering with cold.

"They're dead, an' don't count," says 'e. Which was pretty much so.

I can feel 'is butt now, waving round the back of my head. Crazy 'e was. I knew my time was near, an' sure enough I was the next. I just turned my 'ead to curse 'im once more and a bullet went into my mouth an' out through my cheek; that's the mark, 'ere. An' another got me in the chest. Then I lay down flattern'n ever an' coughed myself queer. An' then Collins was killed an' Oldfield wounded.

So the only one left was Mr. Carstairs, sitting with 'is back against a mule, lookin' like a dead man come to life again, sayin' over an' over, "We don't surrender—we do not surrender. Go on, yer beggars, fire! Why don't you fire?"

Mad, clean!

I FELT like dyin', then, but I made a most tremendous effort to keep up, as I wanted to see the end—though it 'urt. I could only look in one direction. My 'ead was propped up by Croly's body, so I couldn't see what was 'appening the other side. I 'eard fellers clamberin' over the rocks an' squish-squashin' through the mud.

Mr. Carstairs got up shaky.

"Go away!" says 'e. "Do you 'ear? We're still fightin'! Get right back, please!" 'is rifle was in 'is 'and, the muzzle waving from side to side.

And another voice answered, soothing-like, "All right—all right! *We* know."

An' some one climbed over me and more Boers came up from opposite.

Mr. Carstairs looked at them.

"What do you want?" says 'e, very slowly. "'Aven't I made it sufficiently clear that we are still fighting?" 'e says. "This is the Regiment that does *not* surrender!"

Those were 'is last words. 'E ups with 'is rifle an' shoots. The Boger 'oo'd spoken fell over, and then—well, I remember a couple of faint bangs an' Mr. Carstairs tumblin' and that's all.

It wasn't till late that night that they fetched us in, and our fellers told me afterwards they'd never seen anything like our ring in all their lives. Eight dead mules an' twenty-three men, nineteen of 'em dead, lyin' on top of each other.

Well, that was Neumayerspruit. Good enough, wasn't it? What could *we* do? If we 'adn't 'ave faced the Boers, Mr. Carstairs would 'ave killed us for certain. It was that or fight.

Otherwise we'd 'ave 'ands-upped pretty quick!

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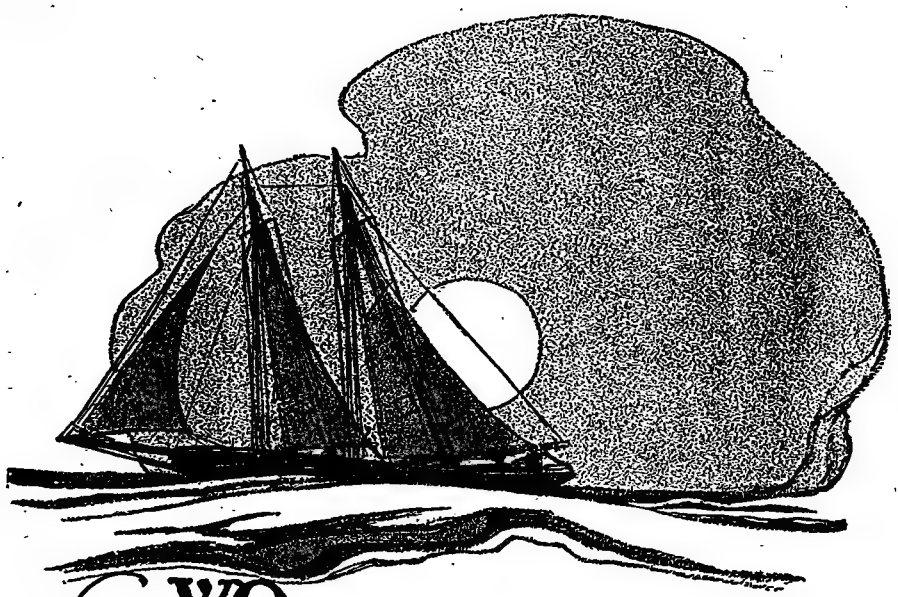

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by Maurice Drake

CHAPTER I

A WASTER WAKES ON THE BEACH

I WOKE on Exmouth beach that early Summer morning much as I should think a doomed soul might wake on Resurrection Day. To the southward, rosy sunlit cliffs showed through faint haze like great opals —like the Gates of Pearl—and the bright business of getting up was going on all around. Hard by the slimy piles of the wooden pier, in a corner tainted by rotting seaweed and dead shellfish, I came slowly to consciousness, my eyes clogged and aching. Lying out all night on dewy sand had made me stiff in every joint, and sore as though I had been beaten all over with a stick.

The young day was one of heaven's own, all blue and gold. A light easterly breeze from under the sun; the tide at half-ebb against it, whipped here and there into a quick feather of white; and the beach below high-water mark new-scoured, wet and clean. The two men whose crunching feet upon the sand had waked me were aboard the dingey—the stout yacht's tender that had been mine twelve hours before—my Royal Torbay burgee still fluttering gaily at her masthead.

Her new owner was swabbing dew from her seats, pointing out her merits to his companion the while. He spoke of me, a thumb jerked over one shoulder to show where I lay upon the beach.

"That there West——" the wind brought me that much; that and a scornful laugh from the other. The whole bright day seemed laughing at me in derision, and I dropped my face upon my arms again and tried to get another hour of forgetfulness. If ever a man cursed himself and his own folly, I did then. I was at the bottom end of things. Poor comfort to reflect that I had only myself to blame.

I'D been on my uppers once before, at Kingston, in Jamaica, just after the earthquake. But I was fit then, with a clear conscience, and there was plenty to do. Now, with two years of idling and folly to my discredit, I had only the sore knowledge of chances thrown away. Besides, the past Winter had tried me hard.

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Poverty and loneliness and the sight of one's property slipping away day by day make a man ripe for any foolishness by way of a change. Only the day before I'd parted with the dingey, almost my last asset, and now, on the morrow, the price didn't seem enough—a rotten waterman's tub, scarcely seaworthy, in part exchange; a couple of pounds' worth of loose silver in my pocket; and the vile pain in my head to make up the balance of the account.

Worst of all was the uncertainty as to what I should do next.

There had been no uncertainty at Kingston. There were more jobs there than men to do them, and I took the first that offered and did right well out of it. I had been with the Deutsche-West-Indien people till then, third officer on their *Oldenburg*, and we got into Kingston harbor the day after the town tumbled about folks' ears.

Trier, our skipper, did the right sort of thing—called at the Consulate and offered free passages out of the place to as many Germans as he could carry, and so on. Then, having done what he considered his duty, he was all for sea again. But I wouldn't go. Able-bodied whites were badly wanted ashore.

The skipper ordered me to stay at my duty, under all the pains and penalties of the German Marine Acts, so I told him to kiss my foot, grabbed what traps I could carry and jumped the ship.

My word, but that was work, that relief business! Awful, a lot of it—ghastly. But I don't know when I enjoyed myself so much in my life. There were still lots of people alive and buried in the ruins and we had to get them out. At first I was in a mixed lot of whites and blacks and yellows, and they were a mixture, too. Our foreman was a full-blooded negro carpenter, a fine chap, a fiend to work, and as strong as a bull. We had two doctors, one of 'em off a Japanese man-o'-war in harbor and the other a visitor—a tourist.

Our working hours were twenty-four to the day, and mostly we forgot to eat, and slept where we dropped. A fine time! Good useful work, tidying things up.

After a week there weren't any more of the living imprisoned, and we had to attend to the dead. Faugh! In the tropics. Awful! They broke our gang up and put the son of the Mayor of Kingston and myself in charge of another lot digging out bodies and burning them. The mayor's son didn't work up to his collar, I considered. So we had words about it and he went off with his nose in the air. To do the chap justice, I now think he only meant to go a hundred yards and come back again, but I hadn't time to think of that then, so I heaved a half-brick at him and shouted to him to go to Hades. The brick got him in the back of the knee and brought him down in the road. I sent a negro to drag him into the shade, and went on with the work.

WHEN the land-breeze had blown the smoke of the last hideous burning away out to sea I was on my beam-ends, so I cabled the governor, *"Detained here for want of funds."* I might as well have saved my money, for I ought to have known what the reply would be.

"Capital experience pitch in and earn some my son," he cabled back.

A hard case, my old man. That's he, all over. Nobody else in the world would have paid for those two unnecessary words at the end, just to show it wasn't because he was short of cash that he wouldn't help me.

The relief-gangs had broken up and the sailors and most of the tourists departed—and there was I in a suit of rags, my hair about four inches long, and not a notion of what to do next. It was the long hair decided me, I think. I hunted up my negro carpenter and got him to build me a little lean-to shack against the ruins of the Presbyterian Church, promising to pay him when I could. Then I got a sheet of tin, and painted a gaudy Chinese dragon on it with the words:

PROF. WATSON
TATTOOING ARTIST

and nailed it up over my door. I copied the dragon from the cover of a packet of Chinese crackers that was blowing about on a rubbish-heap, and anybody can do tattooing if they've got the sense to keep their needles clean.

As luck would have it, I hadn't long to wait for customers. In fact, I was busy from the first day. When the shipping began to ply regularly again there were heaps of tourists to see the ruined town, and lots of them came to be tattooed as a souvenir of their visit.

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Then I got an assistant—a young Japanese from a ship that had been wrecked in the Virgin Islands. He really was an artist, that chap, and his work put me out of conceit with my own botching. So after two years I sold him the house and business, lock, stock and barrel, and cleared out for home.

I landed in Plymouth with about six hundred pounds in my pocket, and used it up in two years. Lazy, lovely South Devon held me. I was fool enough to let the old man's cablegram rankle, and I never went near him—just sent him a card to say where I was, which he answered with another, and that's all the communication we held with each other. I loafed about from one place to another, idling, drinking more than was any use to me and generally wasting my time. I hadn't any particular need to work; I'd earned six hundred pounds as easily as falling off a log, and thought it would be easy enough to earn another lot when that was gone.

There's a class of man common on the South Coast of England, and especially in Devonshire, who is no manner of use to himself or anybody else. The natives call them remittance-men, and that exactly describes them. They're idlers, mostly sons of busy professional men or manufacturers. When a fellow is such a hopeless waster that he's a nuisance in the old man's office or factory, he gets pensioned off with perhaps a hundred or a hundred and fifty a year, paid at regular intervals on the condition that he keep away from his native place.

They idle more or less gracefully. They go fishing and sail small boats, or get drunk and sleep in the sun. They're very little use to anybody. But they were my only associates for two years, and they and sleepy South Devon brought me down to sleeping out on Exmouth beach.

CHAPTER II

THE GOOD SHIP *LUCK AND CHARITY*

IT WAS just after Christmas that I landed at Plymouth, and by the time Spring came I'd got tired of messing about and fuddling in a garrison-town, and thought I'd like a bit of sailing for the Summer. Of course every waster I'd picked up with knew of the very boat that would suit me, and I should think I inspected half the rotten tubs in Devon and Cornwall before I found the packet I wanted—a Yealmpton ketch.

I heard of her by accident. A boat-builder at Yealmpton had built her as an experiment, to the order of his brother-in-law, who was a fisherman in the Brixham fleet. The brother-in-law had died bankrupt before his boat was rigged, and the Yealmpton man had her left on his hands. Half the South Devon coast was laughing at him, for it appeared she was useless to anybody, being the wrong build for a trawler and too small for a coasting-boat.

I went over and saw her one Saturday afternoon and fell in love with her on the spot. For my purpose, her faults were her virtues. Her hold, too small for ordinary freights, was amply big enough for me, and besides it left more cabin-room at each end of her. She was a beauty, to my thinking; a good beamy boat, not too deep in draft, and built like a house. That builder, in building for his sister's man, had put good stuff into the boat. The day I was there, two other fellows had come down from Brixham to see her, and were jeering at her, to cheapen her, I suppose. The builder was raving her praises, and I got into his good graces at once by speaking the truth, saying that she was a well-built craft; honest material and honest work in her.

"P'raps you'd like to buy her?" one of the Brixham men sneered.

"I would," I said; "and I will, if Mr. Brett here and myself can come to terms."

That was the way to tackle the man, for he'd put his heart into her timbers. The other two sheered off and I bought her, hull and masts only, as she stood, for a hundred and ten pounds, and she was dirt cheap at the price. For another hundred he rigged her, fisherman-fashion, rough hard gear throughout, to stand any weather. He divided her hold with cheap matchboard bulkheads into a saloon and two cabins, and decked over her hatch with four skylights. And I got to sea with her, well pleased, before the middle of June.

For pleasuring, she was a big and rather clumsy-looking craft, very beamy and high at the bows. Her best friend couldn't call her fast, but she was the sweetest boat in a seaway I ever saw in my life. Time and again I've taken her down past the Start

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with a following breeze and the flood-tide just boiling round the corner, lashing out this way and that in nasty little cross-seas that would sink a smaller boat and smack right over higher decks than ours. She never took a drop aboard more than the splashing one expects in tidal overfalls.

In a nasty chop she'd lurch a bit, sort of dodge sideways now and again, as a man dodges when you slap him unexpectedly on the shoulder. But she'd crab her way through it as dry as a stick. As for dirty weather in the open, she'd laugh at it. In a big, heavy, long sea with real foul weather behind it, once reef her down and she was more like a cradle than a ship.

BRETT had named her the *Luck and Charity* — of all outlandish names—but I didn't bother to change it. Sure enough she brought me luck in the end—the best of luck—and at first she was a charity to the fraternity of wasters, and no mistake.

With her hold turned into cabins, she was a very roomy packet. Though she was only forty-five feet or so between perpendiculars, she was fifteen in the beam, every inch. There was a little skipper's cabin aft, about twelve feet by nine, with just headroom enough to stand upright, two bunks and a flap table. The big square hatch we decked over was about eight feet by thirteen, and there was a roomy forepeak—almost fit to be called a forecastle—with two bunks on each side. Altogether we could shake down ten men without crowding, though I've often slept fifteen aboard, the extra members of the family sleeping on cabin seats or on the floor.

It was an idle time, those two years, but past question I enjoyed it. The wasters were delighted, of course, and I was the dearest old chappie in the West of England while funds lasted. It worked out about level, though. They had cheap quarters and I a cheap crew, so everybody was pleased. We put to sea or stayed on moorings just as the weather served or the whim took us, so mostly we had fair-weather cruising. Ashore, there was plenty of company. There's a freemasonry of sorts among remittance-men. They snarl behind each other's backs pretty much, but can unite upon occasion. I happened to be the occasion this time, and there was plenty of visiting and card-playing and fuddling and remarkably mixed company whenever we went ashore to revel.

The first Winter, I tied her up in Teignmouth harbor and lived ashore, and when the Spring came started off again. Not being built for a yacht, the *Luck and Charity* wanted a lot of ballast, but she wasn't too deep for getting in and out of those little West of England harbors, and by the end of the second Summer I knew the coast from Swanage to the Land's End like the back of my hand. And very useful knowledge it's proved to be since then.

It didn't seem so useful, though, when I came to tie up for the second Winter. I chose Exmouth Bight for anchorage this time. You can't play the fool without spending money—though I'd made mine last very well considering the fun I'd had—and I was cleaned out down to the last fiver. Exmouth is a free harbor—no dues unless you go into the dock—and so Exmouth looked the place for me. The Winter before I'd had plenty of invitations ashore, but this time the wasters had got wind of my circumstances and invitations were off. I was broke. My guests had gone ashore with jaunty farewells. There was a Winter ahead to be got through somehow with no money and no friends.

I kept my one paid hand hard at it, lowering topmasts and stripping gear and, when the lot was snugged down for the Winter, paid him off and told him to clear out and go home. He was a stolid shockhead from Topsham, called Hezekiah Pym. The wasters used to laugh at him, and certainly he was the quaintest sample of a yachtsman I ever met.

His vocabulary for days together seemed limited to the one word "Aw," which, varied sometimes to "Caw" as an expression of surprise or admiration, served him in nearly every emergency. But he might have been born on the water, so handy was he afloat, and he had served my turn so well that I felt sorry to part with him. I had to pawn my watch to make up the money I owed him, and even then it was a near thing. It was a good watch that my father had given me when I was twenty-one; but the pawnbroker wouldn't advance me more than the value of the gold case because he said the crest and motto engraved on it spoiled its sale-value. That's one of the penalties of knowing who your grandfather was, and the result was that when

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I'd made up 'Kiah's money I hadn't half a sovereign to my name.

WHEN I paid him, he looked first at the money and then inquiringly at me.

"That's a fortnight's brass extra because you haven't had notice," I told him.

"Aw," said he, and put the money in his pocket. Then, as an afterthought, "What be you gwine t' do fer th' Weenter, sir?" he asked.

"Stop aboard and catch flukes."

"Aw," said he again, meditatively, and went ashore, leaving me to moralize on rats and sinking ships. But I did him an injustice for once.

Next morning he was aboard again before I was out, and brought me my breakfast in bed.

"What brings you back?" I asked.

"Come back t' catch flukes 'long o' you," he said.

"Look here," I said. "I'm broke, 'Kiah, and I can't afford to keep you. So you just slip it off to Topsham again, and get another job."

"What for?" said the fool.

"Because I'm broke."

"I thought you would be, mighty soon," he said slowly. "You been kippin' all they lot too long."

Not once had I ever caught him in the slightest act of incivility all the time I'd had the boat, yet that was how he regarded my guests. "Yas, sir;" "no, sir;" "surely, sir." Never a word out of place, but that blinking stolid lump had all the wasters sized up, all the time. Like their own bogs, South Devon men are. They smile and look tranquil, but you never know what's under the surface. Yet there's good rocky ground in them to stand on, sometimes, if you've the knack of finding it.

After I'd had my breakfast, I went forward and told him again I hadn't a job or pay for him, and he must go. He only said "Aw," protestingly; and he didn't go, and hasn't gone to this day. He never alluded to the matter again except one day in Midwinter when we'd had a good haul of flukes and could spare some to send ashore to sell. Then he looked up from the loaded dingey alongside, blowing on his half-frozen fingers.

"Nort doin' up to Topsham now," said he. "I'm better off yere'n what I should be 'ome."

It must have been cheerless at home, that's all. The Winter came in wet and cold, and I nearly went melancholy-mad with the sheer monotony of it.

With each rising tide we swung our nose toward the harbor-mouth and watched the water cover the mud-flats. At flood we laid up or down or cross-channel, before the wind and cursed the swinging round because it tangled our fishing-lines. At ebb our bows pointed up river and the mud-flats became uncovered again. We could only fish at dead water, flood or ebb, and between times we went to sleep or watched the scenery—dirty water or dirty mud according to the state of tide.

We caught thousands of flukes—a coarse mud dab they are, not bad eating occasionally, but beastly as a regular diet. On the whole I can't say I was pleased with that Winter, and indeed it would take a man with queer tastes to admire wet mud-banks with the thermometer at freezing-point, and wind and rain enough to keep you in the cabin for days on end.

I hadn't any prospects for the Spring, I hadn't any money, any amusements or any change of diet; and this atop of two years of jolly Summer cruising, with heaps of company, and regattas and like sprees up and down the coast.

MAN can not live on flukes alone, and to get bread and matches and candles—to say nothing of an occasional orgy on butcher's meat—I began to sell the boat's fittings. First the side-lights went, the spare anchor, the compass—things I thought I could replace cheaply or do without. But by early Spring we were pretty well stripped. The fittings and bedding from the cabins, the saloon-table, crockery, spare rigging, any blessed thing that was detachable and had a market value.

The saloon and cabins had relapsed to their original condition as hold, the match-board partitions having been chopped up and burned in the after-cabin stove, to save buying coal. The hold was a picture, with its broken bulkheads jutting from the sides and the floor littered with driftwood and rubbish. To save keeping two stoves going, 'Kiah came aft and shared my cabin. He never sulked or lost his temper or grumbled once all the Winter and, though he never had a word to say for himself, he was company of a sort for me.

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Lying on Exmouth beach the day after the dingey had gone, not the least sore thought I had was that I'd spent money to which he had as much right as myself. I groaned aloud as I tried to get to sleep again, and as the sun rose and warmed my aching bones I fell into an uneasy doze that brought some short forgetfulness.

CHAPTER III

THE TOE OF MISS PAMILY

WITH the sun warming me I must have slept for over an hour; but, lying face downward as I was, even my dreams weren't pleasant. I thought I'd fallen overboard from the *Luck and Charity*. Rising half drowned under her stern, I called to 'Kiah for a rope. He was steering but, instead of throwing me the main-sheet, he reached over a long arm, caught me by the side and pushed me under again.

Drowning, I gulped salt water, and woke from my dream with a jerk, to find a girl standing over me, prodding me in the side with her toe. Stupid with sleep, I rolled over and sat up blinking to stare at her.

The sun, just over her head, dazzled my eyes so that I couldn't clearly see her face, but from her get-up I judged her to be the usual type of summer visitor to the town. A big straw hat, a light blouse and dark skirt, and a bathing-towel in one hand. With the towel she held her shoes and stockings, and I saw that the foot she had stirred me with was bare.

I asked her what she wanted, sulkily enough.

"We want to go across the river."

She pointed to the yellow sand-hills on the Warren side.

"Well?" I said.

"There doesn't seem to be a ferryman here. Don't you want to earn sixpence?"

Her tone was not conciliatory.

I looked down the beach. A man and woman stood by the waterside, but the boatmen had gone—to breakfast, I supposed. For a moment I was minded to tell her she must wait till they came back, but the thought of 'Kiah came into my mind. I owed it to him to make up what I could for the money I'd spent overnight.

"I don't expect my boat's smart enough for you," I said, scrambling to my feet.

"I didn't expect anything lavish," she snapped.

At her tone I looked down over my clothes and passed a hand over my head and face. I didn't look prosperous. One boot was broken at the toe, and my serge coat and trousers were stained every shade of filth, from dry mud to tar, by the winter's longshoring. I wore one of 'Kiah's jerseys, *Luck and Charity* in dirty white letters across the breast. Bareheaded, my hair was full of sand and there was a fortnight's growth on my cheeks.

My razor, an elaborate safety fakement, had been sold early in the Winter to get 'Kiah an oilskin jacket and, though I considered I had a right to shave with his, it was a right not often exercised. He'd inherited the thing from a grandfather who'd been in the army, and I didn't share his high opinion of it.

"'Tes gude—'tes a Guv-ment razor," he protested once, when I cursed it. No answering a statement like that; so my only protest was to shave as seldom as possible. But in bright sunlight, with this girl staring at me, I wished I'd done so more recently.

My newly acquired dingey was in a state to match its owner. It couldn't have had a coat of paint for two years, and to make matters worse the beach-children had been playing in it and left it half full of pebbles, seaweed and sand. With the girl looking on I started to clean out some of the rubbish, and the man and woman strolled along the water's edge to join us.

Feeling ashamed of myself and the shabby craft, I kept my head down and went on with my work until the man spoke.

"An old boat?" he said, civilly enough.

For all answer I mumbled some sort of assent.

"Is she tight?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said. "I only bought her yesterday. She'll take us that far without sinking, I suppose."

HE SAID no more, and we pushed off. The filthy tub leaked like a basket, of course, and the water was level with the bottom boards before we reached the Warren. I saw what was going to happen when we started, and rowed my hardest to get across before their feet were wet, but facing them I had time to look them over and see what sort of people my first customers were.

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The other woman was a beauty—a real beauty, of the big placid type. She said very little on the way across, just trailing one hand in the cool water now and again, and listening to the talk of the others.

The man struck me favorably. He was tall and gaunt, with a bit of a stoop in the shoulders. His clean-shaven face was sallow and he wore spectacles, which gave him the air of a student of sorts. His big square mouth was immovable as the slot in a post-office, save for an occasional movement at the corners that seemed to hint at a laugh suppressed. A man you took to at sight; straight as a line, you could see he was.

The girl who had waked me was of a different class from the other two. Now that I could see her more plainly I saw she had a likable little face enough, but you couldn't call her a beauty, anyhow. Big eyes and short upper lip were her best features; her nose was a snub, and she was well freckled, and wore her hair in a club sort of short pigtail. Her dress was shabbier than the other woman's, and I took her for a paid companion, or rather a poor relation, which would account for their tolerating her impudence. She was full of life, chattering nonsense the whole way across, and once I was fool enough to put in my oar.

They were talking about businesses for woman, and she said she'd like to be a barmaid.

"Such nice, intellectual, clean-bred men they must meet," she said.

I considered that was meant for me.

"You'd make a very good barmaid if you didn't talk too much and neglect your business," I said.

The two girls glanced at me, the beauty with her eyes wide. The man stared hard, his mouth more like a post-office than ever. He didn't say anything, just stared, and I saw I'd put my foot in it.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I beg your pardon. But it struck me that young lady was getting at me."

"Well—I was," she rapped out.

The stares were transferred to her, and she blushed under her freckles.

The big girl said, "Pamily!" in shocked surprise; and the man said quietly, "Then you deserved your answer."

Conversation languished after that, but the "Pamily" girl was irrepressible. She put out her tongue at the man behind his back and simultaneously winked at the beauty. I don't think she meant me to see it, but I did, and the beauty saw I did, and then it was her turn to blush.

I've learned since that that young woman's manners do occasionally cause embarrassment in well-bred circles. Blood will out; her grandmother was a mill-hand, and the granddaughter's thrown back to the original type.

She's told me since that "Gutter-Snipe" was one of her school-nicknames, and like most school-names it's deadly appropriate. She's got the busy wits and the quick tongue of the gutter, combined with the haste in action and the discerning eye for essentials that lifted her forefathers out of it.

THE Warren beach was steep-to, and when they got out of the boat they had to scramble up a high slope of sand. The girls reached the level beach at the top and were out of sight at once; the man lingered to pay me. He hadn't anything less than a shilling, and I couldn't change it.

"Take the shilling and call it square," he said, blinking at me through his spectacles.

"The fare's twopence a head. I don't take charity," I said rudely.

"No need to be rude, my man," said he. "Either you can trust me or you can take the shilling and bring me the change later. Here's my card. I'm staying at the Royal."

"I don't know when I shall be ashore again," I told him. "When are you going back to Exmouth?"

"In about an hour, I expect. The ladies are going to bathe."

"Then I'll wait till you come back and put you across again," I said. "That'll make up the shilling's worth."

He nodded, and scrambled up the beach after his women-folk.

No sooner was he out of sight than the younger girl's head appeared against the sky and she came slipping and sliding down over the steep bank of sand again. When she reached me she was breathing fast as though with running.

"How old are you?" she jerked out.

"Twenty-eight."

"You were drunk last night, weren't you?"

"I was."

"You fool!" she said.

Words can't tell the scorn in her voice. It brought me up all-standing, as though

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she'd slapped me in the face. Literally, I couldn't answer her. Before I'd thought of a word she'd scrambled up over the slope again and was gone, leaving me staring after her like a gaby.

When I got my wits about me—I don't know when I was in such a rage! The cheek of the little wretch! I'd have given all I had to be able to grab and shake her till her eyes stuck out and her hair came down.

One thing I would do. I'd show her I was independent, at all events. Somebody else could row them back and spend my sixpence. I got into the boat again and pushed off to where the *Luck and Charity* lay at anchor.

It's queer, the way one's resolutions change with one's moods. 'Kiah was getting breakfast, but I kept mine waiting while I had a shave with his awful razor. After a wash I felt better and got overside and had a swim. Scrambling aboard the small boat her looks disgusted me, and I tidied her up as best I could, next thing, and put a couple of cushions from the cabin into her.

Doing this I heard a clock at Exmouth strike nine and remembered I had left Exmouth beach at eight o'clock. I don't pretend to explain it, but, almost before I knew where I was, I was rowing back to the Warren beach to await my fares.

I'D been thinking hard about the cheeky girl, you may be sure, and a good breakfast and a wash had revived my conceit. Her slanging indicated that she took some interest in me, I thought, and I made up my mind I'd rout out my last decent suit of clothes and go ashore in the evening and try and pick her up on the Promenade.

Her behavior had confirmed me in my notion that she was some sort of dependent, and I thought I could furbish up sufficient togs to impress her with the fact that I was a yacht-owner. I'd take the starch out of her, I reckoned. No denying she'd waked me to an interest in her.

They kept me waiting half an hour longer. While I was waiting I remembered the card the man had given me and searched my pockets till I found it.

"Mr. Leonard Ward" was the name, and the address "Mason College, Birmingham."

When they came down the beach the little girl gave me one look up and down, and then sat in the boat with her back to me all the way across, ignoring my existence. The man Ward gave me my shilling and offered to pay me for waiting, which I declined, and the three of them were strolling up the beach together when I was seized with a diabolical impulse.

"Here," I called after them; and as they turned round, "You—the little girl. Miss—Pamily, is it? I want you."

Her face went crimson, but she walked back to me.

"My name is Brand," she said, very stately.

"Pamela Brand?" I asked.

"Pamela Emily Brand. And what do you want of me, pray?"

"I want to ask you something—two things. Why did you go for me just now as you did?"

"Because I hate waste," she said. "What's the other thing?"

"Will you meet me this evening?"

It was her turn to be struck speechless now. She couldn't get any redder than she was already. She looked over her shoulder to see if the man Ward was within call, and then, her face quick and alive with resentment, leaned over and with her open hand fetched my face a smack you could hear fifty yards down the beach. She's a lady, I tell you! And before I'd recovered she was marching off with her nose in the air. Just boiling with rage, I knew, and I laughed aloud, for all my stinging cheek. I'd drawn her. I'd teach her manners—the gutter-bred little prig!

CHAPTER IV

AN OFFER FROM THE MAN WITH SPECTACLES

ROWING back to the *Luck and Charity* I resolved more than ever to go ashore and seek her out that very evening. Now that she was piqued, I knew she would welcome any advance on my part, as giving her an opportunity for revenge. So the first thing I did after scrambling aboard was to look out my best suit of clothes and give them a brush up. Then I turned in to get an hour or two of decent sleep.

Judging from the way the ship's head was lying and from the sunlight streaming through the doorway on the floor I guessed it must be about half-past two, and three-quarters flood, when I was waked by a boat bumping alongside and by some one

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climbing on our deck. 'Kiah was about, I knew, and reckoning he could attend to any visitor, I turned over and was trying to doze off again, when he swung himself down the companion-stair, barefoot.

"Gen'leman to see you, sir," he said.

I reached for a boot—he'd been forbidden to call me "sir" since I'd left off paying him—but he'd gone as quickly and silently as he came.

"What name?" I called after him.

A mumbled inquiry, and the voice of my morning customer in answer.

"Tell him Mr. Ward wants to see him. He had my card this morning."

So Miss Brand had called in male assistance. Somehow I hadn't thought that of her. But I hadn't any particular objection to a row, so pulled my boots on and went on deck, stretching myself. He was sitting on the bulwarks, looking aloft, a hired boat and man hitched alongside.

"GOOD afternoon," he said civilly.

"Afternoon," I answered. "Want me?"

"Yes. I—I want——" he hesitated.

"Look here," I said. "If it's about that girl this morning, I may as well tell you straight she deserved all she got."

"What did she get?" he asked curiously.

"Well, I cheeked her," I admitted.

For one minute he looked like laughing outright. The corners of his mouth shook and he twinkled behind his glasses.

"Miss Brand hasn't honored me with her confidence," he said. "In any case, that young lady is quite capable of managing her own private affairs. I wanted to see you on business. I understand you want to hire out this boat on a charter?"

"I wanted to sell her and clear out to sea," I told him. "Failing that, I wouldn't mind a charter, certainly. But she's not fit for a yacht. Her cabin-fittings are stripped, and there's nothing under this hatch-roof but smashed bulkheads and driftwood."

"I don't want a yacht. It's for the coasting-trade. How many tons could you get into her, and what water would she draw loaded?"

"Not more than about sixty tons, I should think. And I don't know about draft. Something under nine feet, for certain. She'd never pay. You'd want three men, and how's the freight on sixty tons to pay their wages?"

"The draft is the point," he said. "They're shallow waters I want her for. We can't use a bigger boat very well. In fact, it's just this small-class of vessel I'm down here to look out for. She's stanch, isn't she?"

"Sound as a bell," I assured him. "Come below and have a look at her, and then you can tell me just what you do want."

We went all over her, and he seemed an intelligent man, from his comments. Being evidently shore-bred, he couldn't see how badly she'd been stripped, of course, but the few questions and remarks he did make were all to the point. After going through the hold and forepeak we went aft into my cabin and sat down.

"She'll suit my purpose," he said, and looked across the table at me inquiringly.

"Where do you want her to go?" I asked.

"To and from the Scheldt," he said. "I am a director of a small company, trading at Terneuzen, in the Isle of Axel. We have a couple of boats on charter now, but we're busy and can do with another, for a year at least. You would take our goods from English ports here on the south coast, returning in ballast. What ballast did you say this boat wanted?"

"Summer, fifteen tons or so; Winter, twenty-five, I dare say."

"You can allow for more than that," he said. "We're excavating beside our wharf there and are glad to get the mud taken away. So you needn't blow over for want of ballast. And now as to terms."

We discussed terms easily enough. Thinking such a small company as he described would be sure to haggle, I asked twice what I was prepared to take, and he accepted on the nail. After that I was almost ashamed to point out that I should have to ask for an advance.

"The boat isn't fit for sea as she is," I explained. "I've sold all my spare stores, and shall have to pay for labor as well, to fit her out. If you're in a hurry, that is. I dare say my man and myself could get her rigged in a month or five weeks."

"That won't do," he said. "I want you to get under way just as soon as you can. We'll advance you fifty pounds. Will that be enough?"

I nodded.

"That'll be ample. As to security? I'll give you a mortgage on the boat herself."

He seemed to approve of the suggestion.

"That's business," he said. "I'll get the

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mortgage prepared at once, and you can have the check when you please. You'll want to take on another man or two, won't you?"

He got up and we went on deck, me feeling almost dazed with my good luck.

He shook hands as he was going over the side. "By the way, I shall want your name and address."

"My name's West—James West."

It didn't seem quite the occasion to drag in the Carthew-hyphen part of my name.

"As to address, I haven't one ashore. You'd better describe me as master and owner of the ketch *Luck and Charity*, registered at Plymouth."

"That'll be good enough," said he, and went down into his boat and was rowed away, leaving me fit to jump with delight.

IN MY first transports I did walk round the after companion on my hands till the main boom got in the way of my feet and toppled me over. When I got right-end-up again Hezekiah had come aft and was staring like a stuck pig.

"What do he want?" he asked.

"Sir," I shouted at him. "Say 'sir,' you uncivil Topsham dab."

"You 'eaved flukes at me for callin' 'ee 'sir' yes'day," he protested.

"That was because you were my partner then. Now you're my crew, my first officer, my navigating lootenant, my paid wage-slave. We've got a job, 'Kiah. Your wages are doubled, to count from last October. You'll have a lump of arrears to draw to-morrow. Go and wash your face, and then go ashore and spend the money I got for the dingey last night. In meat, d'ye hear? A duck and green peas and a cold apple tart at Crump's, and cream to eat with it. Us'll feed like Topsham men when the salmon comes up river, 'Kiah. Us have got a job, 'Kiah—a twelve-month charter-party at good money—and us draws fifty quid to-morrow. D'ye understand, you plantigrade?"

"Caw!" said 'Kiah, cheerfully, and went forward to wash himself before going ashore.

We fed like princes at half-past five. My mouth waters now at the thought of that duck and green peas and the sweets (for he obeyed my orders to the letter, having no initiative of his own), and that after a Winter on flukes and dry bread! And when I went ashore afterward in clean clothes, with the first decent meal under my belt that I'd eaten for months, I was ready to be kind to anybody—even to viper-tongued Pamela Emily Brand. But I never saw her, though I trapesed up and down that Promenade from eight until eleven.

When I woke next morning, it struck me I'd been in rather a hurry to take the man Ward at his word. But the confidence wasn't misplaced, for he came aboard at eleven with the check in his pocket and the mortgage-deed ready for signing. That was soon done, and he handed over the money and my first instructions.

I was to get he topmast up; replace the missing stores and victual the boat; hire an extra hand and proceed to Teignmouth, there to load clay for Terneuzen. My consignee was a Mr. Willis Cheyne, the company's representative on the spot, and I must look to him for further instructions.

I couldn't make out what the man Ward thought of me. He was always civil, but so he was to 'Kiah or to the boatman that rowed him. It was impossible from his manner to guess whether he thought me a man of his own class or the filthiest loafer on the beach. He was the sort of chap that talks as politely to one man as another, whether earl or chimney-sweep, and with that I had to be content. I was really more curious to know what the two girls thought, but naturally he didn't air their opinions in the course of business conversation.

The rigging once started, we worked double tides. I took on two men instead of one and drove them for all I was worth, intending to take whichever proved the better of them to sea with me. They turned out to be a pair of crawling slugs, and I sacked them the third day and looked for another couple to take their place.

But the tourist-season was beginning, all the best men on the beach were busy and the report spread by my two failures discouraged the others. In the end 'Kiah went to Topsham one evening and returned with a cousin of his, a Luxon—everybody in Topsham is called either Pym or Luxon—and we three finished the job in a week from the day the other two were sacked.

Ward was aboard nearly every day, and once he brought his women-folk with him. I was aloft, too busy to do the polite, so I shouted to him to make use of the cabin

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and went on reeving the peak-halyards.

The Pamily girl scowled up at me till she must have nearly got a crick in her neck, but I gave her a friendly wave of the hand and after that saw no more of her than the top of her big straw hat. Foreshortened, she looked like a mushroom wandering about the deck.

Luxon was just such a silent shockhead as 'Kiah himself. I never learned his other name; 'Kiah always called him "Banny," which was obviously impossible.

The job done, he drew his money and went ashore without a word to me of his future intentions, but 'Kiah explained that he wouldn't come to sea with us. "'E reckons 'e'd ruther stay 'ome," was all I could get out of him. His going left us still shorthanded, but I didn't worry about that, feeling pretty sure we could pick up a man when we got to Teignmouth. I did—and what a man!

CHAPTER V

THE ONE-SHOE VAGABOND

THE evening before we left Exmouth I was in the dock-entrance, filling our water-breakers from the hose where the ferry-steamers water, when a voice hailed me from the top of the steps and asked if I was the ferry.

"What ferry?" I asked, without looking up.

"Across the river. To—Dawlish, is it? I want to keep along the coast-road."

"You'll find the Warren ferry-boat on the outer beach. There's a steam-ferry leaves here for Starcross in half an hour or thereabouts."

"What good's a sixpenny steam-ferry to me? I'm on the road;" and the owner of the voice came down and sat upon the steps just above me.

He was on the road, and no mistake about it. I never saw such a long, lean, broken-down tramp in my life. His coat and shirt were worn through at the elbows, showing his thin bare arms. The holes in his ragged tweed trousers showed he had on another pair of blue serge underneath, both pairs frayed to fringes at the heels. He wore no hat, and his boots were past even a tramp's repairing. As he sat, he took one off, looked at it whimsically with his head on one side, threw it into the dock and then served the other in the same way.

"It's a pity to separate 'em," he said cheerfully. "True, they were never a pair, but they've done a good few miles in company."

"You're a chirpy bird," I said.

"Of course I am," said he. "Why not? Six months ago I wasn't given as many weeks to live, and yet here I am, fit and well, thanks to God's fresh air and a sane life. I've neither house nor farm nor fine raiment to bother me, nor woman, child nor slave dependent on me. I've even half a lung less to carry than you have, by the healthy look of you. My hat once on, my house is roofed." He put his hand to his head. "I forgot. It blew over the cliff a few miles back. All's for the best in this best of worlds. That's another worry the less."

"You've got two pairs of trousers," I suggested.

"True, O seer. A concession to public tastes. They are selected so that the holes in the inner pair do not correspond with those in the outer, and thus decency is observed. And now what about this ferrying business?"

I had got my water-breakers aboard the boat and was stowing them between the thwarts.

"Jump in," I said. "I'll put you across."

"I may as well warn you I haven't a sou to my name," he said. "You'll have to work for love. I'll take an oar and work my passage, if you like."

"Catch hold, then."

It wasn't the first time he'd been in a boat, evidently, for he came aboard neatly, without stumbling or awkwardness, took the oar I proffered him and handled it very fairly.

HALF-WAY across I asked him what he was doing at Dawlish.

"Nothing, I expect. I've given up asking for jobs. It's much easier to ask for grub. Almost anybody'll give you that in this dear land of mine—poor folk especially, but work isn't so easy to get. Besides, I'm an unhandy fool at the best. I never learned any trade worth knowing."

"Have you a trade?"

"Bless you, yes. I'm a pressman—newspapers; reporting, reviews, anything—or was, before my lungs began to go. The doctors ordered me fresh air and exercise in a mild climate, and I'm getting them tramping the South of England. Then I was fat

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and flabby and unhealthy and morose; now I'm the lightest-hearted wastrel on earth, and I've stopped spitting blood these last two months."

"What are you going to do when the Winter comes?"

"Don't know. Same thing as before, I suppose, unless I can ship south in some packet or other."

I pricked up my ears. "Ship south, eh? Are you a sailorman?"

"I used to report the big regattas for the *Yachting Gazette*," he said. "I had to know one end of a boat from the other to do that."

"Had any grub to-day?"

"So-so. Haven't done badly. Bread for breakfast, and more bread and an onion in the afternoon. Why?"

"Feel like supper aboard my boat?" I pointed to where lay the *Luck and Charity*, just visible in the gathering dusk.

"Nothing I should like better," he said airily, so we went aboard and I set before him cold fried sausages and baked mackerel.

The man was ravenous—almost starving—and he ate like a shark, I watching him across the table. In the lamplight one could see him better and, upon examination, he wasn't such a bad-looking tramp. He had a short black beard and mustache, his hair was close-clipped and, for a wonder, he was clean, save for the dust of the roads upon his tattered clothing. Lean as a lath, his cheek-bones stuck out and his eyes were sunk in their sockets, yet he looked what he had claimed to be, fit and well, and sunburnt to a healthy brown.

After he had wiped the dishes clean he got up.

"Shall I wash up after myself?" he asked.

"No hurry. Sit down and chat. D'you smoke?"

"When I get the chance. Thanks."

HE PRODUCED cigarette-papers from some corner of his rags and rolled and lit a cigarette of my tobacco. Inhaling a few breaths luxuriously, he began to look about him.

"Books—books," said he, and got up again to run his nose along my little shelf. "'Practise of Navigation,' 'Ainsley's Nautical Almanac,' 'South of England Cruises.' Hullo! 'Pecheur d'Islande.' D' you read Loti?"

"With a dictionary handy."

"Good man. 'Pecheur d'Islande' takes a bit of beating, don't it? Henry James's 'American,' too, eh?"

"I'm trying to break myself in to him. 'The American' is readable."

"Readable! You savage! Half a mo', though. Balzac. Marcus Aurelius. What sort of ship d'you call this?"

"The *Luck and Charity*, coasting-ketch."

"The Luck's mine, the Charity yours. Extend it to a night's shake-down, will you? A heap of old sails in any lee corner'll do me well."

"You're welcome," I told him. "Turn in when you like. I've got to be about early to-morrow morning—we're going round to Teignmouth to load. Like to take a book to bed with you?"

He chose "Peau de Chagrin" and we made up a bed of odds and ends in the hold. He lay down at once and I left him reading with a candle on the floor beside him. But when I looked in on him a quarter of an hour later he was fast asleep and snoring, his beard in the air, the cords in his lean throat twitching as he breathed.

AS LUCK would have it, the Teignmouth tug brought up a vessel next morning. As she was going back alone I bargained for a cheap tow round. In the hurry I forgot my guest, and when he came on deck we were passing the harbor-mouth.

"Shanghaied me, have you?" he said.

"I forgot you. We're only going as far as Teignmouth this trip. That won't take you off your road, will it?"

"Any road's my road," he said philosophically. "Can I be of any use?"

"Can you cook?"

"Near enough, I expect," said he, and set 'Kiah free by frying the breakfast, which he did very well.

I was messing about the deck afterward, tidying up a little, and took a pull on the topsail-halyards, which were new stuff and were loosening in the sun. The other end of the rope was insecurely hitched, and my down-haul pulled it off the pin and just out of reach.

It began slowly to slide aloft over the sheave and was quickening pace when the tramp went up the shrouds like a lamplighter and caught it at the crosstrees.

"You've done some sailoring," I said when he came down, the free end in his teeth.

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"Yachting," he said shortly. "Just enough to know my own uselessness."

"Good talk," I said. "Care to ship with me aboard this packet? We want a man."

"What's the trade?"

"South Coast to the Scheldt, I understand."

"Sounds good enough," he said. "But I'm supposed to be an invalid of sorts. I may not be up to the mark, but I'll try it for a bit, if you'll have me, on one condition. I'm to chuck it any day I please without any nonsense about giving notice on either side."

"All right. We'll see how it works. If you can't stick it, you can't; if you can, you'll be company for me. What's your name, by the way?"

"Voogdt."

"What a name! Dutch?"

"My grandfather was. It's a good enough name for me."

"No offense," said I, for he sounded testy. "Only we seem to have a rum collection of names here. Mine's Carthew-West, the boat's the *Luck and Charity*, the first mate is Hezekiah Pym, and now we've shipped a crew called Voogdt."

"Austin Voogdt, if you want the lot of it," he said, in perfect good temper once more. And so we came to Teignmouth with our full ship's-company.

CHAPTER VI

SLEEPY-TOWN

WE TOOK forty tons of clay from Teignmouth and, with fair weather all the way up Channel, reached Terneuzen on the third day. We made a light-hearted crew, all three. For me, I was to continue the cruising that had amused me for the past two years, and be paid well for it, to boot. Voogdt, for all his baresark philosophy, was well enough pleased to have a roof over his head, warm clothing and regular meals. And as for 'Kiah, give him three meals a day and tell him what to do next and he asked nothing more.

Voogdt got on wonderfully well with 'Kiah. A bundle of nerves, he used almost to dance with irritation at 'Kiah's deliberate speech and gait, slanging him in many-syllabled terms of abuse, which 'Kiah strangely enough seemed rather to enjoy.

"Move! Get a move on you, you slab-sided megatherium!" he would say; or, "Gangway! Make way for your betters, you hibernating troglodyte!" and 'Kiah would grin as he shambled about his work, peaceful and undisturbed.

"'E's a funny blook, id'n' 'er?" he said to me once, almost admiringly, as he was doing his trick at the wheel. "Uses longer words 'n what you do. French, I reckon." I fancy he thought Voogdt complimented him by assuming him proficient in that foreign tongue.

Personally, I got on very well with the man, too. He was mad, if ever a man was, but he was a gentleman and a good sort as well. His attitude toward life was recklessly joyous.

"I lost half a lung in a month," he told me once. "Any shift of wind may finish me—a drop or rise of temperature in the wrong direction, or a degree more or less of humidity or dryness. Nobody really knows much about tubercle—how it may flourish or die in any given individual. I'm like a child wandering in a whirling engine-room in the dark. A false step or a lurch, and—whisk! I'm gone. What's the use of taking care?"

He couldn't do the heaviest work, but apart from that was as good as any other man—better than most, because he was willing. In fact, he steered better than 'Kiah, who, having held a tiller before he could read, steered rather by instinct than conscious effort.

'Kiah would lean over the wheel as though half asleep, swaying to the motion of the vessel and, although he steered as well as the average fisherman, carelessness born of familiarity often let him half a point or so off his true course. He steered as much by the feel of the sails as by compass, and so rarely needed to exert himself. Steering well enough for all practical purposes, he didn't try to do better.

Not so Voogdt. His eyes never left the bows except for an occasional quick glance at the card, and he put his uttermost muscle and will power into his work. It exhausted him, of course. I've seen him mop the perspiration from his face when he was relieved. But he steered to a hair's-breadth nicety all the time.

I was thankful to have found him, for apart from his sailoring, which was plenty good enough for a small coaster, he proved good company. An educated and a well-read man, he had seen life from above and

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underneath, and his stories lost little in the telling. He hadn't been a reporter for nothing.

He'd cut down long old yarns to a dozen or so of words so quaintly put together that their new dressing made you laugh at hoary-headed chestnuts you'd yawned over years before at school. He could even make 'Kiah laugh, a thing I never succeeded in doing, try as I would. When I found out what manner of man he was, I offered him the spare bunk in my cabin, thinking he would be more in place there than sharing the forecastle, good chap though 'Kiah was. Voogdt said as much at once.

"'Kiah's an awfully decent sort. Think it 'd hurt his feelings if I shifted?"

"Ask him," I suggested, and Voogdt did so. I fancy he told him my book-shelf was the principal attraction aft. 'Kiah displayed no wounded feelings whatever, and Voogdt's thought for him only rendered him the more welcome in my quarters, so it was a very merry and bright ship's-company that entered the Scheldt, the third morning after leaving Devonshire.

THE Deutsche-West-Indien boats used to call at Antwerp, so I'd been in and out of the river often enough before. Terneuzen lies on the south bank, at the entrance to the Ghent ship-canal, about a couple of miles from the mouth of the river. As tide was making, we managed to get there without a pilot. It seemed to me a queer place for an English company to open shop, yet there were the sheds, plain enough to see, with "Isle of Axel Trading Company" painted upon them, as large as life.

They were built on the big embankment that keeps the tide off the fields, a good mile from the town, and lock-gates, flat Dutch pastures and tillage all around them. I never saw a place that looked less like business in all my life. Four small sheds of wood and corrugated iron sufficed for office and warehouses, and a chimney smoking behind the office hinted at some sort of a dwelling under the same roof. The wharf was a mere skeleton of wooden piles sticking out into the water, with a six-foot planked way along the top leading to the sheds.

According to the chart, the whole lot, houses and wharf, would be half a mile from the river at low water, and separated from the stream by dreary mud-flats.

It was just high tide when we got there, and so were able to float alongside the wharf, a red-faced, youngish man with short curly hair shouting directions from the shore. We rode so high that we could look over the embankment right down on the cows feeding in the green pastures behind it. The place was as peaceful as a dairy-farm, no houses nearer than the town, and I wondered more than ever what trade any company could do in such a deserted spot.

As soon as we were made fast the curly-haired man came aboard, very busy about nothing.

"My name's Cheyne. I'm the manager. Cap'n West? With clay from Teignmouth?"

"Forty tons," I said.

"Good. May as well get your hatch-cover off, Cap'n. Then come ashore 'n have a drink. We'll get it out of her to-morrow, 'n then ballast you to rights, 'n off to sea again, eh? Too long in port's bad f'r th' morals, eh?"

"Shouldn't think there was much chance of going on the bend here," I said. "Unless you go bird's-nesting or chasing cows."

"Y' can go on the bend anywhere, cocky," he said, and hiccuped, and I noticed he'd managed it all right. "Terneuzen's a hot little shop, lemme tell you. 'T least, I've livened 'em up a bit. Sleepy hole it was before they had me t' liven 'em up. We'll go into town this evenin' an' shake a leg, what?"

I took my papers to his office—the untidiest hole I was ever in—sat among the litter for half an hour, had a drink and a chat and then went aboard again.

Voogdt was stowing the foresail when I got back, and looked at me inquiringly.

"That cove full?" he asked.

"Full as an egg. Useful sort of manager, eh?"

"Useful sort of business generally, I should say," he replied. "What the dickens are they going to do with this clay here? Feed cows on it? Is your money all right, skipper?"

"I haven't earned my advance of fifty yet. When I have I'll ask for another."

"I should, if I were you," said he, and then the matter dropped.

HOWEVER, there were more signs of activity next morning. We rigged a rubbish-wheel at the gaff end, and with the help of four hired Dutch laborers started to get the clay ashore.

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Even Cheyne put on an old suit of clothes and bore a hand, but I never saw such slack methods as his in my life.

The man worked like a navvy, I grant, but I should have thought he'd have been better employed in tallying the tubs of clay. As it was, he'd pull and haul with the rest of us, very noisy and hearty, and I admit he hustled those Dutchmen better than I could, knowing the language as he did.

Then, when we'd got out a half-dozen or a dozen tubs, he'd pick up his tally-book again.

"How many's that?" he'd cry.

"I make it a hundred and twenty-three."

"Hundred and twenty-three goes," he'd say, and tick them off without checking my figures, and then back to the tackles he'd go again. I put him down as unmethodical, but a man-driver. And the driving was wanted, no denying that, for those four Dutchmen might have been picked for their stupidity.

When we came to the bottom of the forty tons, Cheyne began to get fussy. He was as careful to have the last pound or two of clay out of her as he'd been careless about the two-hundredweight tubs. He even had the tubs and buckets scraped and the sides of the hold cleaned down, as though he wanted to make up for his slackness in the tallying. It was high water again by the time we had done, and he said we could knock off till half-ebb.

"Your chaps had better turn in for a spell," he told me. "We work at low water after this. I'm going up town now to get some grub. Care to join me, Cap'n? Yes? Come along, then."

On the way he explained how he wanted us to ballast.

"That mud you're lying on is always silting up, and we ballast with that to keep the channel open to the wharf. See?"

"How are we to get it aboard?"

"By brute force and bally ignorance, me son, same's we got the clay out with. We can't afford a dredger yet. All you have to do is to lower the tubs on the side away from the wharf, send two-three men overside with shovels, and the rest pulley-haul, and there you are. How much d'ye want to steady that packet of yours?"

"Twelve tons'll be ample, this weather."

"Take twenty—take twenty," said he. "You never know when it may come on to blow, off this coast. Besides, we want the stuff taken away, and it's a charity to give those Dutch lumps another day's work. Bright lot, ain't they!"

"Did you get 'em out of an idiot-asylum?" I asked.

"Ha, ha! Good—that's good. No, they're sane enough to be let loose, though I grant they ain't an intelligent sample. I'm with you there. But they do well enough to shovel clay, and it's a kindness to give the poor swabs a job. Besides, they're cheap."

He was talking about cheapness and losses all the time, which went to confirm me in my notion that the trading-company wasn't a particularly successful venture. I began to think that in spite of his invitation he meant me to pay for my dinner myself.

AS WE walked along on the top of the embankment I couldn't help wondering where he was taking me, for not a sign of any town or village could I see. On our left was the river, shallow water over mud-flats; on our right, flat pastures divided by long lines of poplars, receding in perspective to the flat horizon. Dominating them, the great ship-canal ran inland. But once we crossed the lock-gates, the town became visible.

It proved to be the usual longshore Dutch village, half nautical, half pastoral. Two or three tiny streets of one or two storied houses, red-tiled, gay with green and white paint, and clean as rows of new pins. They clustered round the foot of the gray church-tower, church and cottages alike dwarfed to toys by the great locks of the canal. There was a modern hotel, pleasantly placed for Summer trade, with wooden benches outside it under the lime-trees; a pilot-house, built of little Dutch bricks and looking for all the world like a doll's house, and a tobacco-shop, clean as a dairy, much patronized by the sailors passing through the locks.

I never saw a quainter, prettier little place—a sleepy little farming-village, with the canal alongside to smoke your pipe by and watch the passing ships. The girls are pretty there, too; big-eyed, pale and dark. The head-dress of the district is a wide-winged thing of white linen like a Beguin nun's, and the women wear thin fluttering plates of gold on either side their forehead,

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which flip about and twinkle like golden butterflies. Under the Summer-evening light, I took to the place at once.

Contrary to all Cheyne's talk of bad business and economy, he wasn't mean about his personal expenditure. He stood me a thundering good dinner in the hotel, a first-rate bottle of hock with it, and as many cigars as I could smoke. But somehow I couldn't take to the man. He let on to be a square hearty chap enough, with no nonsense about him, but his manner was too uncertain for me. One minute he was over effusive, slap-on-the-back, hail-fellow-well-met, and the next was stand-offish, as though he'd remembered he was one of my employers and wanted to remind me of it, too. He wasn't as good a man as Ward, but he didn't think so, and made no secret of it.

"Ol' Leonard's all right," he said once, when I was telling him how I'd been chartered. "He's all right enough, but he's a square-toes. I wonder he gave you a job, if you had on a brass hat when he first met you." Another time, he said Ward was a fossil. "He's too slow to come in out of a shower, is ol' Len. Good job for him I'm here. He'd be robbed right and left, else."

He was ready enough to talk about himself. He'd been a sailor too, it seemed.

"With Warbeck's, of Sunderland," he said with an air, as though he expected a lowly coasting-skipper like me to grovel at the very name of his tin-pot firm.

"I was third officer on their *Gloucester*."

"A fine boat that," I said, and let him gas about her for a while.

Later on I tried to sound him about the two girls, but all I could get out of him was that the Pamily one was his cousin, and the other—a Miss Lavington—was her cousin on the other side. Like most bounders, he showed the cloven hoof most when he was talking of his womenkind to a stranger. Half the time he was careful to refer to them as "the ladies," for my benefit, and the other half went too far the other way.

"She's a limb, is young Pamily. Hasn't she got a tongue?" was his tone one minute; and next it was, "My cousin, Miss Brand."

His business-talk varied between overconfidence and sudden reticence or evasions of the point under discussion. He gave me the notion somehow that he was rather incapable, but was trying hard to impress one with his wits and ability.

If he'd been altogether reserved, I should have liked him better. It was none of my business, the way he conducted the company's affairs. But his half-chummy, half-patronizing way made me tired, and I was glad to get back and start ballasting the *Luck and Charity*.

CHAPTER VII

VOOGDT'S WARNING

THE wet mud was stiff, awful stuff to shovel, and worse to stand on. We put some planks on it to give foothold, but we were slipping about all the time, and in half an hour all hands were slime from head to foot.

Voogdt chucked it.

"I can't shovel this stuff," he said. "It's man's work, and I'm only half a man. Am I sacked, skipper?"

"Not you," I said. "Get aboard and find something to do on deck. This job 'd kill a horse."

Cheyne came down soon after, in dirty clothes, with a shovel, and asked what "that chap" was doing aboard. He grumbled a little when I told him Voogdt couldn't do heavy work.

"This is an all-hands job. If I can take a shovel, he ought to."

"He can't," I said, "and that's all there is about it;" and Cheyne said no more.

I'm bound to say he worked like a good one, himself. By my reckoning we got a hundred and twenty tubs aboard in three hours. That made a good twelve tons, and when the tide drove us off the mud I told him we were ready for sea.

"No hurry," said he. "I haven't got your sailing-orders yet. Turn your chaps in for a spell, and we'll get a few more tubs aboard next ebb."

Next ebb wasn't till midnight, and I told him so.

"Can't your tender babes work after dark?" he sneered.

"They'll work when I tell 'em," I said rather hotly, for his tone annoyed me.

"Then tell 'em now," he said. "Tell 'em it's pay and a quarter for night-work, if you like. I've got plenty lanterns in the shed."

Who could make anything of such ways?

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Employing fools because they were cheap, and paying able seamen pay and a quarter to help them! Extra pay for night-work at putting more ballast in a boat than she needed, because he wanted mud cleared away! A dredger would have cleared the lot in a couple of days.

I thought of Voogdt's warning, and decided I might as well see if I could get another advance. I'd spent thirty pounds in fitting out and victualing, and clothes and things for the three of us, but that left me nearly twenty in hand, and of the money spent certainly ten or twelve pounds had been unauthorized expenditure on our personal needs.

On the other hand, the freight worked out at about thirty pounds, so that really I still owed the company the twenty I had left. However, when I asked for an advance, Cheyne made no bones about granting it.

"How much?" was all he said.

I hung in the wind a minute, uncertain what to ask. "I spent thirty fitting out," I said. "And the freight's thirty. Would another twenty be too much?"

"Say thirty, to be on the safe side," said he. "The Oost-Nederland Bank in Terneuzen'll cash my check for you," and he drew me a check on the spot.

This after his harping on economy and grumbling about Voogdt being idle. I concluded finally that he was an unbusinesslike fool.

As I was leaving the office he called after me.

"We're paying two-bob ballast-allowance," said he.

"Two bob?" I was ashamed to confess my ignorance of what he meant by ballast-allowance.

"Two bob a ton. So it's worth your while to ballast pretty deep. Two quid in your pockets if you take away twenty tons, and only four and twenty bob if you go as you are. So you'll see it pays you to wait a tide."

"It would pay me to fill her full, then," I said, surprised.

"A sure thing it would. But, of course, that's nonsense. Twenty tons is ample, as you say. Take twenty-five, if you've got time; but you must get away next tide. I'm expecting the *Olive-Leaf* to-morrow from Grangemouth, and there's no room at the wharf for the two of you."

WHEN I got aboard after cashing the check, Voogdt was standing by the hatch looking at the heaps of slimy muck in the hold. I jingled the canvas bag in his face.

"Did you touch him?" he asked.

"For thirty. So we're still a quid or two ahead of 'em."

"What d' ye make of the man?" he asked, jerking his head toward the office.

"A bumptious silly fool. That's what I make of him."

"What was the man Ward like? Another fool?"

"Not he," I said. "Unbusinesslike he may be, but a fool he is not, if I'm any judge. I hope this chap isn't going to let him down."

"So he isn't going to let you down, that don't matter much," Voogdt grunted. "When are we going to get hatches on?"

"Next tide. There's some more ballast to come aboard first."

"What on earth d' you want more ballast for?"

"I don't want it," I said. "At least, the boat doesn't. But there's two bob a ton allowance on all we take away, it seems."

"That's a rum notion, paying on ballast, isn't it?"

"I don't know," I said. "I've only been in steam since I served my apprenticeship. Come to think of it, I've never carried ballast before. Even when I was serving my apprenticeship in sail, we always had freights both ways. I suppose ballast-allowance is a custom in this coasting-trade."

"A rum custom," said Voogdt.

"They want this stuff cleared away."

"Ah! that explains it," said he. "Why didn't you say so before? How d' ye expect to make a sailorman of me if you don't instruct me as we go along?"

We worked that night by the light of hand-lanterns, but all hands were tired out and, though I promised 'Kiah and Voogdt to share the new allowance equally, we couldn't get more than about ten tons aboard. Cheyne said that would do.

"It'll have to. The *Olive Leaf* 'll be here next thing. You can charge for twenty-three tons, Cap'n. That do you? Here's your papers. You're for Dartmouth, to load deals. Now get your hatch-cover on, and slip it with the morning tide."

It came on to blow a little when we got outside. Nothing to hurt; a northerly

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breeze, too, which was all in our favor, but we had a bit of a bucketing in the Straits of Dover. The *Luck and Charity* I knew I could rely on; with her extra ballast she was as stiff as a church, and I felt a bit more amiable toward Cheyne when I saw how well she behaved.

We got wet jackets, of course, but nothing worse. 'Kiah I'd tried before and could trust, too, but Voogdt and the running-gear were new, and I watched them both. The man shaped as well as the hemp and manila; both were inclined to give a bit under the strain at first, but a brace now and then to the tackle and a helping hand and a joke with the man did wonders. Both were working sweetly before we reached the Race off Portland, and Voogdt took us through it, only laughing whenever some nasty cross-sea slopped aboard and slatted down over him.

It was pretty to see him, the veins standing out like twisted wire on his wet lean hands as he strained to steady the kicking wheel, and to think how scared he'd looked when he came on deck two days before and found me driving through it with the lee rail under water and the hatch-cover awash. Working like a Trojan, laughing at the smash-smashing of our bows and the cataracts the Race was sending over him, he didn't look much like an indoor man with his death-warrant signed, sealed and delivered by the doctors.

"Gad! This is fine!" he cried, when I went to give him a hand. "No, let me go, skipper. I can take her through it myself. I like it!"

He was able to bear a hand in Dartmouth now, when it came to loading the deals. In fact I think he handled more of them than did the quay-lumpers, who were half asleep, like all Devonshire men. Good food and a regular life were telling on him. He was putting on flesh, and the sea-air was beginning to color his sallow, sunburnt cheeks a bit.

We got our ballast out on the quay and the deals aboard in four days, but then had to wait a day or two, the wind having shifted round to the east. Voogdt spent his time idling about the old town, and 'Kiah had a half-day's holiday and went to Topsham.

I WAS sitting on deck, smoking and thinking about the spree I'd had at last Dartmouth regatta, when somebody hailed from close alongside.

"*Luck and Charity*, ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" I answered, and jumped up to see who it was. I don't think I was ever more staggered in my life, for there in a waterman's boat, just under our stern, was the Pamily girl!

I threw a rope-ladder overside. She scrambled aboard, and I stood staring at her, with my mouth open, I expect.

"Good afternoon," she said, shortly. "You're loaded, I see."

"Y-yes," I stammered. "We got away from the wharf yesterday afternoon."

"I'll see your papers," she said, most businesslike, and turned to the men in the boat. "You'll wait for me, please," and she led the way to the cabin.

Dumb with surprise, I got the papers out and laid them on the table before her. She went through them all, her brows knitted for all the world like a young housewife trying to check the butcher's bill. I couldn't believe she knew anything about the business, but she made no remarks, only folding each paper as she read it and handing back the lot when she'd done.

"Thank you," she said. "You brought ballast, didn't you? How much?"

"Twenty-three tons, Mr. Cheyne made it," I told her.

"Where is it?"

"On the ballast-quay."

"Thank you. That's all I want."

She rose, and looked me up and down.

"You're looking very well," she said.

"I'm very fit, thanks. Regular employment and—and all that sort of thing, you know."

She nodded and went on deck, and I followed her. Just as she was going down into her boat I asked if I could offer her a cup of tea.

For one minute I thought there was going to be more face-smacking, but she suddenly turned dangerously pleasant.

"I should love it," she gushed. "But I mustn't stay long, Captain West. Miss Lavington's waiting for me ashore."

"It won't take any time," I assured her. "I've got one of those oil-blast lamps that boil a kettle in about five minutes."

She let me get tea and we drank it on deck, and all the time I felt like one sitting on a powder-magazine. Her manner was atrociously correct—demure and sweety-sweety, prunes and prisms all the time; and she was making eyes at me most

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affectedly at every word. But I thought I could read behind that. I guessed she was trying to lure me out in the open and destroy me, and I wasn't taking any.

So the more she played the arrant flirt, the better I behaved. I wouldn't be drawn into the slightest advance beyond the position I held. I was a coasting-skipper; she the friend and, in a sense, the representative of my employers. So the more she gushed the politer I got, and when she rowed away I swear she was biting her lip. That sort of sexless little gutter-snipe just loves a row, and she didn't bring it off that time.

Voogdt hailed me from the quay soon after and I went to fetch him in the dingey. He had learned that the deals we had shipped were from the Baltic, and fell to discussing the matter with me.

"More paying trade for our employers," he said. "Shipping deals from the Baltic to Terneuzen *via* Dartmouth. You note the direct and economical route, skipper?"

"Oh, hang the company!" I said. "If they're going scat, they're going scat. Meanwhile we're being paid to learn the coasting-trade."

"It'll take a bit of learning, I can see," said Voogdt drily. "I hope it won't be too much for my poor brain." And not another word could I get out of him.

'Kiah came back that night, silent as ever, and next day the wind went south with the sun and we got under way for Terneuzen again.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VAGABOND ASKS QUESTIONS

VOOGDT worried me with questions about the cargo all the way up Channel, and for the life of me I couldn't find an answer for him that even satisfied myself. Here were we being paid on the tonnage of the boat—sixty tons burden—and only carrying thirty. Last voyage it had been forty, so that in two voyages we were drawing money for fifty tons of cargo which we had never shipped.

For the sake of argument I put it that their customer might only have ordered forty tons of clay and, as to the deals, they were ugly stowage for a boat as small as the *Luck and Charity*. Anyhow, I didn't see why we should worry so long as our charter-money was paid.

"I'll tell you what it is," I said. "You're a Sherlock Holmes, that's what's the matter with you. It's your rotten Fleet Street up-bringing. I never saw such a walking mark of interrogation in all my life. Why should you worry about it? You've got your money in advance."

"That is why. I am all right—and that's why I can spare time to look after the next man's interests. Besides," he drawled, "if you want to know, I have conceived a certain regard for you personally, my noble commander."

He got up and strolled forward, and I saw no more of him till change of watch.

His words had stirred my curiosity a little by this time, and when we reached Terneuzen my first care was to see whether any of our clay was left over from the last voyage. It was all gone, however, and I nudged Voogdt, drawing his attention to it. In its place was a large heap of broken stone. He looked at it, rubbing his bearded chin in meditation.

"What's that stuff for?" he asked.

"How should I know?" I said impatiently. "To feed cows on, I suppose."

"Looks like road-metal to me," he said musingly, and sure enough when Cheyne came aboard he told me that was what it was.

"It came as ballast," he condescended to explain. "We can use it very well. Some of it'll stiffen the mud behind the wharf and the rest mend the cart-track between here and the town."

I told Voogdt this and he nodded. "So the *Olive Leaf* brought ballast, did she? I wonder what she took away?"

BY THE evening I was able to tell him that, too. Cheyne asked me to dinner, as before, and casually mentioned her at table as having gone farther up river.

"To Antwerp?" I asked.

"Yes. She took up some of your clay. It was sold to Ghent, but the buyers sold again to an Antwerp pottery."

I didn't question him further, but chuckled rather as I thought what a mare's-nest Voogdt would find in that announcement. Cheyne saw me smile and without more reason fired up in a moment.

"What the —— do you see to grin at in that?" he demanded. "Don't you believe me?"

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"Of course I do," I said, surprised. "I wasn't laughing at anything you said."

For a moment he looked threatening, then calmed down, and passed the bottle along. He wasn't on the bend this trip as he had been the last, but he drank a good deal, notwithstanding.

In the intervals of getting out the deals, I told Voogdt where the clay had gone, but he displayed no surprise.

"It would have paid the consignees better if we'd taken it all the way, I suppose?" was all he said. "But apparently the company's made a bit this time by being paid extra carriage."

Ballasting was done in the same way as before, except that Voogdt was able to help part of the time, and we sailed with a full twenty-five tons of mud instead of a bare twenty-three. As before, Cheyne was in a hurry to get rid of us at the last.

"Off with you," he said cheerily. "On hatches and clear out and make way for your betters."

"The *Olive Leaf* again?" I asked.

"The *Kismet*. She passed the *Hasborough* last night with a fair wind. Guess she's outside the river now, waiting tide."

"What's she bringing?" I asked.

"What business is that of yours?" He put on his stand-offish manner in an instant. "You're not paid to ask questions, but obey orders. Just remember your place, Cap'n, and I'll remember mine."

I raged inwardly for having laid myself open to the snub. The brute had been genial as a blood-relation till then. But it was no good quarreling with one's livelihood, so we got away without another word. Voogdt took the wheel when we got into the main stream.

"What's the *Hasborough?*" he asked.

"A lightship off Norfolk."

"Then, if the *Kismet* passed her yesterday, she's been north, that's obvious. And if she's been north, it's a hundred to one she's carrying coal. And if she's carrying coal, which is salable anywhere, she'll be loaded deep."

"Sherlock Holmes," I said, and went below.

When I came on deck half an hour later we were passing Flushing, and out at sea a small coaster about our own size was lying at anchor. She was comparatively light, riding high in the water.

"There's the *Kismet*, Sherlock," I jeered. "And if she's got more than thirty tons aboard, I'm a Dutchman."

"Then either 'tisn't the *Kismet* or she isn't carrying coal," he said quietly.

Half an hour later I had the laugh on him again, for we passed near enough for a glass to show her name in dirty white letters under her bows.

"What d' ye make of that?" I handed him my glasses and took the wheel.

He had a long stare, and then turned and looked at me queerly.

"*Kismet* it is, right enough. Down helm a wee, skipper, and get a bit closer."

"What for?" I said; but I did as he asked.

"Now hail 'em," he said when we'd got close enough.

He was itching with excitement and curiosity.

"Ahoy!" I shouted. "*Kismet*, ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" came down the wind.

"Ask 'em where they're bound," Voogdt prompted.

"Where—are—you—bound?"

"Goole to Terneuzen, with coal," came the answer.

"There you are," I said. "Now you know. Like most of you private detectives, you're half right and half wrong. She is the *Kismet*, and you said she wasn't. She's come from the north and she's got coal, just as you said. And she's got a half-cargo and not a full one, which is flat contrary to your notions. Now what d' ye make of it?"

"I make rank unbusinesslike ways of it," he replied. "And on the face of it, that's all one can say. I'm beat, I admit."

"Well, what odds?" I said. "We've got our money, and that's enough. If the thing's being mucked I'm sorry for Ward, but he's big enough to manage his own affairs. I'll mind mine; you mind yours; and everybody'll be pleased."

"Poking my nose into things has been my business for some years," Voogdt snapped at me. "You can't drop the habits of a lifetime in ten minutes, you dunderhead," and after that stuck to his wheel, grumbling about dolts and thick-wits under his breath.

We were bound for Poole this time, and no sooner had we got our ballast on the quay than Ward made his appearance. Voogdt stared at him hard, and late in the evening came aboard full of information about him.

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"He's a chemist. He's got a professor's job at Mason College, Birmingham."

"I told you that before."

"You didn't tell me his attainments," he protested. "He's a sound man—a worker. He's had the gold medal of the Royal Society of Arts, is a Felton prizeman and heaps more besides. What on earth can he be doing dabbling in a little trading-concern like this? A man with his record could get to the top, if he liked, and yet here he is tinkering at this business with a cub like Willis Cheyne for a manager. He isn't a fool, yet he behaves like one. *Ergo*, he is one distraught—is mad, good mariner. Too much learning—you know the rest of it."

"Oh, hang!" I said. "You worry me with your twaddle. Let's do our work, and draw our pay and live in peace. Go to bed. We start loading potatoes to-morrow at 6 A.M."

"Potatoes!" he said wearily. "They're shipping potatoes to an agricultural country now. Next time we shall carry windmills in sections, or canal-water. They're short of both in Holland, and naturally can pay big freights on 'em. Good night, O massive-brained ruminant. Good night."

I THOUGHT potatoes were a funny cargo, myself. But I wouldn't encourage him in his silly ways and so swore I considered it natural they should be imported.

"There's Ghent handy," I said, as we were squabbling about it on the way up Channel. "Ghent and all the other Belgian industrial-centers close by. A big population wants food, don't it? And industries want deals and clay and coal."

"In half-cargoes!" he jerked out; but I had him then, having been thinking about the *Kismet* myself.

"That's because of the tide," I said. "How could they get deep-laden boats, even of our light draft, over those mud-flats at neap tides? When we left Terneuzen it was bottom of neaps, wasn't it? So much for your small cargoes."

That shut him up and so ended the discussion for the time being, and we got in, discharged our potatoes and ballasted as before. Some of the *Kismet's* coal still lay by the warehouse, but not more than ten tons at the outside. The rest was gone. Even Voogdt grudgingly admitted there was nothing unusual to comment upon.

BUT the evening before we sailed we had a shock. Our bags of potatoes were lying neatly stacked by the wharf, twenty-five tons of ballast were aboard and the hatches were on, ready for sailing.

Having an hour or two to wait for tide, I suggested to Voogdt that we should stroll along the bank to Terneuzen and have a drink before we went. When we got to the canal-entrance we had to wait, the lock-gates being open. Right beside us was a German coasting-schooner, and I thought I'd air my German a bit and impress Voogdt.

"*Wo gehen Sie?*" I said to a boy on deck.

"*Emden. Mit Erdapfeln.*"

He used the slang-word "*Erdapfeln*" instead of the more correct "*Kartoffeln*" and I turned to Voogdt to translate, without thinking of the sense of the words, but he needed no translator it was evident.

"Potatoes," he said under his breath, like one dazed. "Potatoes! Hear that?"

He leaned over and spoke to the boy himself:

"*Woher sint Sie gekommen?*"

"*Von Sas van Gent.*"

The thing had soaked into my thick head by this time, and we stared at each other in silent amazement.

I was being paid a sovereign a ton to bring potatoes three hundred miles to Terneuzen, while Sas van Gent, only ten miles up the canal, was exporting them in bulk to Emden!

No explanations could square that. We forgot the drink we'd come out for, and turned to walk back to the *Luck and Charity* with our heads in a whirl.

Half-way back I stopped in my stride.

"I read a yarn once," I said, "about a man who saw a Government announcement in the papers that the Woods and Forests had oak-trees to sell, and another from the Admiralty to say they wanted oak timber. So he stepped in and sold England her own property and retired on it."

Voogdt patted me on the shoulder softly, speaking with exaggerated gentleness, as though to a sick child.

"Don't fash yourself, my son," he said. "This thing is beyond your great brain. 'Tisn't a fool Government this time. It's the rules of trade, and demand and supply, and a dozen other things, all being turned upside-down. It's water flowing up hill,

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James, that's what it is. It's rank raving lunacy, apparently run at a profit, and that's impossible. Impossible, I tell you!"

Walking slowly and thinking hard, Cheyne overtook us as we neared the wharf, and asked us into the office for a drink. To my surprise Voogdt, answering him, put on a raw Cockney drawl, and spoke as though he were an illiterate coasting-hand.

"Why did you behave like that?" I asked him when we got aboard.

"Because I don't want the man to think he's got anybody poking about his wharf except ordinary thick-headed sailors like yourself. I don't want him to sack me just as your education's progressing."

We sailed for Torquay this time, but conversation languished on the voyage. The more I thought of that German-bound boat the crazier the whole thing seemed, and think as I would I couldn't see a light anywhere. Once or twice I made some sort of a suggestion, more in protest against the clashing facts than anything else, but each time Voogdt shut me up.

"I've been over and under and all round it, and all I can say is that it's against nature," he remarked. "I'm going to put it down as an accidental occurrence. But you mark my words, Mr. James Carthew-Hyphen-West, if any more funny things like that happen, I shall go slap off my rocker!"

CHAPTER IX

AN EXIT WHICH IS NOT EXPLAINED

ANOTHER cargo of potatoes awaited us at Torquay, and Voogdt nearly danced off the deck when I told him so.

"I hate being beat. That's what I'm suffering from," he said, half laughing at himself. "After all, the explanation's clear enough. Ward or somebody in the company has money, and Cheyne's induced 'em to put it in this fool venture. When it's gone the company will shut shop and Cheyne'll go to sea again, having had a royal holiday ashore. Let's get the spuds aboard. I hate doing it. But after all we may as well have some unknown fool's money as anybody else. Here's my last word about it, skipper; always see you're paid in advance and lay by against a rainy day."

There was no difficulty about doing that. Cheyne was always ready to make an advance whenever I asked him, even when the money was for my own purposes. We sprung our topmast a month later, and though, strictly speaking, I ought to have paid for repairs myself, Cheyne authorized me to get a new spar at his expense.

"Get a good stick and don't waste time about it."

That was always his cry. "Hurry, hurry. Make quick voyages."

"And he's losing money on every voyage, sure," Voogdt said once almost despairingly. "Either there's a whacking big capital behind him, or he's tired of the job and wants to hurry the smash."

But mostly Voogdt said nothing more about the company's affairs. After the second potato-trip he wrote to a friend of his in London, asking for particulars of our employers, only to find the so-called company was not registered as a company at all.

He showed me the letter.

"There you are," said he. "That settles it. They must have got hold of a capitalist mug, and they're bleeding him. Only——" he stopped.

"Only what?"

"Well, I should have thought a fellow like Cheyne would have opened his sham store in a more amusing place. The Riviera, say. And there's Ward. Cheyne may be a rogue and a fool, but Ward's neither, if I'm any judge of a man."

Unsatisfied curiosity was like a prickle in his flesh, but as time wore on he seemed to be easier in his mind, and after a few trips we'd got the hang of the trade and were just making voyage after voyage without remark.

Each voyage was much like the last. We nearly always had light cargoes, and took away as much ballast as we could get in two tides. We always traded in the English Channel, and nearly always to different ports.

MY BANK-ACCOUNT was growing, and as I'd given Voogdt and 'Kiah bonuses from time to time, we were a flourishing concern. Whatever folly the company represented, we had no reason to complain.

Early in September we were ordered to Guernsey, but just outside the Scheldt it came on to blow nasty from the southwest.

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It looked like an equinoctial gale, and we stood across to the North Foreland, intending to drop anchor there till it blew itself out.

It lasted two days, and while we were lying at anchor we saw the *Kismet* coming down river toward us, reefed down, but with a bit of topsail hoisted. Just as she passed Birchington, about a mile from us, she got a sudden buster of a squall off the shore, and before you could say "knife" her topmast was over her side.

She luffed up toward the shore all she could and dropped anchor, to clear away the raffle and mess.

We rowed over in our dingey to proffer assistance. The wind was gusty and strong, but the water smooth, and we soon reached her and climbed aboard.

The skipper, elderly, and a typical coasting-master, stood in the waist placidly directing his three hands as they hacked and cut away the wreckage. He was dressed coaster-fashion, in blue coat, guernsey and trousers, gaudy red carpet-slippers and a bowler hat, once black, but now green with age. He nodded to us as we went to bear a hand, and when things were getting tidy invited us into his cabin and offered us a drink.

I told him we were from the *Luck and Charity*, and that turned the talk on our only mutual acquaintances—our employers. The old man seemed well pleased with them, and apparently knew a good deal more about them than we did.

"Mr. Cheyne. A fine young fellow 'e is. A true sailor, I call 'im. Miss Brand's 'is cousin—she's a mos' amoosin' young person; and there's Miss Lavington. She's a real lady, that."

"Have Miss Brand and Miss Lavington got anything to do with the company then?" I asked in surprise.

"Surely. It's mostly Miss Lavington's money in it. Mr. Ward, 'e's a partner, too. Them four."

I caught Voogdt's eye. "Only those four?" I asked.

"I don't know of any other."

"Have you been with them long?"

"Jus' over a year. I signed charter for another year only las' month. Good people, they are. Mr. Ward spoke mos' complimentary about the last year's working, an' give me a fifty-pound bonus, an' a shilling a ton rise."

"What are you getting now, Cap'n?"

"Nine an' six a ton-burden between the Tyne an' Terneuzen."

"Don't you go farther north than the Tyne?"

"No. The *Olive Leaf*, she trades from the Scotch ports. They're thinkin' of puttin' on another boat for the Irish Sea. If they can't get one to suit them, Mr. Ward says they'll build."

Voogdt asked a question, forgetting that etiquette demanded he should hold his tongue in the presence of his betters, and the old skipper shut him up at once. After that we both felt rather uncomfortable and took our leave as early as we could.

AS A GENERAL rule one of the most talkative of men, Voogdt none the less had his silent days, days when he grudged even monosyllables, only grunting assent or dissent in answer to direct questions. Sometimes such a mood would last him half a week. Once it was over he talked like a mill, as though to make up for lost time. He was a good talker, and his silences were the less agreeable for the contrast.

Throughout the Summer I had never known him so silent as during this trip to Guernsey. The gale had left a long sea behind it that did nothing to enhance our comfort aboard, and a sulky shipmate only added to my annoyance. I could have kicked him with the greatest good-will in the world.

He cheered up a bit when we got in harbor, and I began to be sorry for him—with a little touch of contempt, perhaps—thinking that it was the roughish weather he had been suffering from. He worked well, as he always did now, getting out the ballast, but in the evening staggered me by announcing that he was leaving the *Luck and Charity*.

"WHAT on earth for?" I asked, fairly taken aback.

"That was our agreement, James, if you remember. I was to leave you where and when I pleased. Well, I please now and here."

"But why? Have I done anything?"

"What haven't you done? You picked me up out-at-elbows and starving, and you've put fresh life into me. That's what you've done. And I'm going to repay you

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by deserting just as the Winter's coming on. I feel a sweep, but I must go."

"Is it the Winter you're afraid of?" I asked.

"Call it that. I can't give you a better reason, or I would. Don't make any more difficulties about it. I feel ashamed to leave you like this, but I tell you I *must* go. That's all."

"What are you going to do? Have you enough money to get on with?"

"No, I haven't. That's another thing I've had qualms in tackling you about. Will you lend me forty or fifty quid? I can't give you any security beyond my bare promise to repay."

That was a surprise. Of course his pay hadn't been large—only thirty bob a week—but, as I was doing well, I had considered it my place to make things easier for the other two. On weekly boats the men are expected to find themselves out of their weekly thirty shillings, but Voogdt had messed with me, and both he and 'Kiah had drawn good bonuses on each voyage. 'Kiah I knew had banked over thirty pounds, and I told Voogdt so.

"You ought to have done as well," I said.

"I've done better, if you want to know," he answered. "Thanks to you, I've banked nearly fifty, but I want to make a hundred of it for a special purpose. Now don't bother me with more questions, there's a good chap, but just let me have the money and be gone."

I grumbled a little, but drew a draft for fifty on the company's agents, and Voogdt buttoned it up in his pocket.

"That's one more good turn I owe you," he said. "If I live through the Winter you shall have a hundred per cent. on that loan. If I don't, you've lost your money and must grin and bear it. Good by, old chap. Keep all my loose traps and use what you want. I shall be with you again in the Spring, and—and maybe I'll have something of a surprise for you!"

TO BE CONTINUED

ELEPHANT SPEARING

AN AFRICAN TRIBAL CUSTOM

FOR hunting the elephant, the Kavirondo tribe of Africa use a peculiar weapon. In shape it is something like the rammer of a cannon, the heavy head giving additional weight in dealing a blow. The thickened part holds a weapon like a dart or arrow. The sharp end of the dart is smeared with a deadly poison. When the terminal piece is in position, the whole weapon measures about eight feet in length. With this spear the elephant is attacked at close quarters. The dart is driven into its body and, being loosely fixed in the handle, sticks in the animal. The handle of the harpoon remains with the hunter. Another dart is placed in the handle and the operation is repeated when circumstances are favorable. In making the thrust, the hunter endeavors to stick the dart in the abdomen where the intestines lie.

The shaft of the arrow-like portion of this complicated spear is made of the wood of the wild olive. The wood of this peaceful tree is used for many singular purposes in different parts of the world. In Africa it is used almost entirely for spears.——*W. Robert Foran.*

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The Pesos of The President

by Ledward Rawlinson

THE man who wrote that maxim entitled "All the world loves a lover" was a false prophet and his statement will not stand investigation, says Bundy Hope. Only part of the world loves a lover, take it from me. Down in South America, where I hibernated for a monsoon or two selling phonographs and phony watches, this perenially blooming, irrepressible member of society has to sneak around like a dog that's stolen a roast of beef or killed an Angora cat. He's the meekest, mildest, subduedest biped in town. He's never allowed to be alone in the presence of his *preciosa*, and when he calls on her on Wednesday and Saturday nights he has to stand out in the street and talk to her through the iron bars that cover the parlor-window, for all the world like a prodigal son on a farewell visit to his mother in the condemned cell.

Not until he's hopelessly and irretrievably espoused is the love-bitten Latin-American allowed to kiss his beloved's lips, and only then with a caution. Ponder over this, you gas-consuming, parlor-monopolizing, supper-grafting beaux of the United States.

And when you've done pondering, lend me your auricles for a while and I'll tell you of the courtship of Shad Carter down in Bogatavia—as malevolent a piece of malfeasance as ever I saw perpetrated anywhere.

ONE sticky afternoon when the steamer *Coronel* of the Compania Sud-Americana dropped her anchor in the shark-infested mud and slime of the little palm-edged bay of La Libertad, two gentlemanly-looking Yankee tourists in spotless white duck came ashore and registered at the Hotel de Cuatro de Julio, every room of which faced a smelly, open sewer. The names of these gentlemen were Velvet Thompson and Shad Carter, and they had both left San Francisco, U. S. A., to avoid the inconvenience of a term of years in jail, though, of course, they didn't put all this on the hotel-register. Strange it is, but true, that district attorneys, judges, magistrates, police officers and other members of the body-snatching fraternity in general never seem to realize that a poor, hard-working man's business is going to suffer when he is grabbed by the neck and prevented from pursuing his daily bread by an extended sojourn in the calaboose. If some lawyer would invent some kind of legislation or other illegal procedure to prevent this, he'd get famous in a week, or ten days at the most.

Carter was a tall, good-looking crook of thirty, well saturated with gentility and education. He could explain offhand the reason why you can get honey from the honey-bee and not butter from the butterfly. He could tell you why there are no

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moose in California and no Zulus in Ireland. He knew the diameter of the moon, the age of the earth, the metric system of weights and measures compared with the opening and closing of navigation on the St. Lawrence, the death-rate of Hankow and many other facts beyond human comprehension.

Thompson was a big, muscular man with a close-cropped mustache and little bits of eyes set in a cold, immobile face that was a priceless possession from a poker-standpoint. He was plentifully gifted with malicious instincts, his operations ranging anywhere from highway-robbery to low-down larceny. He had the wisdom of the serpent and the cunning of the rat, and his spirit was full of guile.

Both men were expert practitioners in chiromancy, necromancy, superfluous hair, electric belts, occult science and all the other mystic arts that have to do with the alleviation of surplus wealth, and their idea in visiting the rural districts south of Panama was to pick up all the money that the rich banana-growers and rubber-planters couldn't squeeze into the bank at the end of the season. But the scheme didn't work well at all, and at the end of a month they were broke.

"We're just about three years too late," says Velvet in disgust as he sank into one of the wicker-chairs of the Café Internacional at La Libertad. "These white-goateed Crœsuses are out of the sophistry and parable class. They've shook off ignorance and idolatry as you and me have shook off the fallacies of the farm. They play bridge and pianolas and use safety-razors and porcelain bathtubs, and take their families to New York and Paris every year. They've been innoculated by the restless germ of mail-order business, free education and all the pandemonium that goes with Western civilization. We're up against it for fair."

Shad meditates for a while.

"THE outlook sure has black-bordered, weeping-willow edges," says he, "but we don't have to do any dirty work at the crossroads just yet. There's another way out, a *caballero's* way. That is for me to marry the President's only daughter, Marie. The old savage has several scow-loads of money going moldy in the bank, to say nothing of several thousand acres of banana-lands, a gambling-casino, a lottery-concession, a bull-ring, a full-dress suit and a rambling old dobie house which he uses as a palace. To make matters worse, his income is steadily increasing, despite the fact that he wears two clean shirts a month and gives a *frijole* banquet twice a week.

"Marie gets a dowry of half a million pesos—fifty thousand gold—the day of the wedding, and the whole shooting-match when *El Presidente* quits the game. If I can get a few carload-lots of his unearned increment we'll say good-by to these red roofs and palm-trees and buzzards and balconies, and beat it to New York, where civilization has not done its deadly work, where Broadway is still redolent with the rhapsodizing Rube. Once there, we'll buy a couple of old grease-spotted suits from Isaacstein on Seventh Avenue, disguise ourselves as Tennessee millionaires and live at the Waldorf-Astoria. That's the way to get invited out to lunch by the presidents of the Wall Street banks. It never fails."

"Bully for you," says Velvet with an extensive smile. "Your proposition is sufficiently obnoxious to be satisfying. That the sun of happiness may radiate forever in the blue heaven of your courtship is my sincere desire. Chivalry and chicanery form the most interesting combination in all the world. Let's have a drink."

Shad clapped his hands for the waiter and ordered the wassail.

"Marie Ortega's as pretty as the girl in the magazine-ads. for cold-cream or hot chocolate," he went on, leaning back in his chair. "She's possessed of deep-black hair parted in the middle and big black melancholy eyes that remind you of Valencia or Bilbao, or Bisbee, Arizona. I've been trailing her through this collection of mud-huts and arroyos for a week. She doesn't often smile, but when she does all the irk and trouble and tribulation in the world seem to disappear. Her smile is a benediction, a beatific vision. It makes a man feel as if he is roller-skating on whipped cream or beer-foam with the blonde lady out of the next flat. Every time the señorita walks down the street with her silk lace *manta* draped skittishly over her head and shoulders, every member of the male population of this burg over fourteen years of age makes obeisance to her and meditates solemnly and seriously over that half million pesos and the balance that will follow in the fulness of time.

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"The whole Republic lies groveling at her feet and, although cabinet-ministers, tobacco-growers, rubber-planters and professional revolutionists send her flowers, *dulces*, sewing-machines and alarm-clocks by the long ton, and serenade her nightly by the score, she spurns them all for a wiry little bull-fighter named Chico, who makes a very precarious living by killing spavined bulls, steers and other bovine mammals in the Plaza de Toros every Sunday afternoon.

"Chico's rivals have made all kinds of affectionate attempts to sever the cord of his existence. They've put poison in his *sopa*, hired a native to drop a spear from a palm-tree as he passes by, shot at him in the dark and tried several other scientific and sanitary methods of hara-kiri. But the saints are on Chico's side, or else he has his fingers crossed, for he keeps on living in the usual way and smiles triumphantly at his would-be assassins and friends. He really is a worthless creature, always ready to exhibit the bull-scars on his legs for the price of a glass of *chicha* or a chew of coca."

Velvet emptied his glass.

"Shad, I've always had confidence in your ability to tread the mushy paths of life," says he, "for I know your tongue is dipped with those sweet-smelling metaphors and amatory lyrics that reach the invulnerable spots in the feminine heart. I defy any white man to beat you on quotations from Shakespeare, or Plato, or Roosevelt, or Michael Angelo, or the 'World Almanac.' Tell the *mozo* to fill 'em up again."

Their credit was still good and the beer kept a-coming. When the sun set behind the old cathedral-walls and the old cathedral-bells started their infernal music, the two were slumbering peacefully in the sawdust of the café.

NEXT morning Shad laid the foundation-stone of his irreligious courtship. 'Twas in this wise. By chance it happened that there was a big picnic to the cemetery, and all the best people were there celebrating La Fiesta de Todos Santos, holding family-receptions in family-sepulchers, and having their photos taken in front of a pile of skulls and cross-bones nearly ten feet high. These gruesome relics had been thrown out of the walled-in caves in which Bogatavians are buried because the friends, Romans and countrymen of the occupants thereof had not disbursed the necessary *dinero* to pay the rent of the resting-place for another five-year term.

It is bad to be dispossessed in life, very bad; but to be dispossessed in death is awful. If ever you go to South America, for goodness' sake don't give up the ghost while you're down there, for the old Bogatavian custom still prevails in many places. Wait until you get back home, where you can peacefully expire in the attic or the cellar with the positive assurance that once buried you will never be disturbed till Gabriel gets out his horn.

During the excitement in that melancholy picnic-ground, a drunken Indian, who was toting a couple of lighted candles in the hope of squaring himself with the tormenting ghost of his late-lamented squaw, accidentally ignited Marie's silk *manta*, and in a second she was giving a good imitation of Joan of Arc being burned at the stake.

By one of those wonderful provisions of Providence, Shad chanced to be ruminating hard by. Seizing the burning wrap in his fingers, he heroically tore it from the girl's shoulders and flung it to the ground.

Marie was very grateful. The moment she emerged from a series of swoons she grasped the gringo by the hands and thanked him again and again. Shad didn't savvy a word of Spanish outside of barroom-blasphemy, but he invented a sort of Esperanto for the occasion and with manufactured emotion waved off all offers or suggestions of reward. At the same time he could tell by the lights in Marie's eyes that the fifty centavos he had paid the Indian to do the trick had not been wasted.

Velvet was crazy with delight when he heard the news.

"Now get a book and learn a few lines of *Español*," says he, "then call at the palace and display your personal charms and audacity."

"*Sí, señor*," says Shad. "As old Captain Kidd used to say, 'Once aboard the lugger and the girl is mine.' "

In a little store on Calle Comercio, the fortune-hunter bought "Tontino's Spanish in Sixteen Lessons," and before bedtime had masticated eight out of the sixteen. Late the next night, as the oil in the lamp was burning low, he faithfully and fervidly waded through the last lesson and slowly put the book down. It was a hot, sticky

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night, with just enough humidity in the air to make you wish you were either dead or in Dawson City. For a while Shad sat in silence, expecting the gift of tongues to descend upon him with a rush, as it did upon the men of old.

An hour went by.

It was now midnight, that ever romantic hour when restless spirits walk the earth and lonely wayfarers mysteriously disappear from the pages of novels. The light flickered and sputtered and went out with a jerk, leaving the room in darkness.

Everything was just right for miracles or psychic wonders.

But, though Shad coaxed and cajoled the Spanish language to come to him, there was nothing doing. Something was wrong. Sweating like a deep-sea stoker, he got up on his feet and crossed the room. From a drawer in the ancient bureau he took out a candle, lighted it and returned to his seat to await reverently the visitation. But no foreign tongues were given away that night.

After an hour of suspense he flung "Tontino's Spanish in Sixteen Lessons" to the floor in a burst of passion and said some awfully wicked words.

In spite of this bitter disappointment, however, it wasn't long before Shad, all decorated up in white drill like one of Childs' head waiters, with an eight-ounce-diamond in his shirt-front, was calling on Marie twice a week. Behind the bars of the reception-room window, the soulless perjurer expressed his love and affection in the luminiferous language of the eyes, and went through all the early stages of a true lover's agony of supplication. Chico, the bull-fighter, didn't like the idea a bit and went about rumbling internally, but Marie merely laughed at his jealous ravings.

Don't think that Velvet was loafing all this time, not a bit of it. He black-jacked several prominent citizens and resorted to all sorts of false doctrines to keep the pot a-simmering.

BEFORE long, Shad made a hit with the President's wife, a little imperious old lady somewhat less than two hundred years of age, with a face all crisscrossed with wrinkles and a tongue that was still in excellent running condition. He presented her with a lot of tinned frankfurters and deviled ham and other enigmatical edibles stolen from a case on the wharf and, to double-cinch and copper-rivet the thing, he gave the President an American dollar-watch obtained in a similar manner.

The effect was great. They took the gringo to their bosoms at once and invited him to dine at the palace at least twice a week, an unbelievable violation of Bogatavian etiquette. In a barbarously furnished room crowded with Gonzalezes and Gomezes and Fernandezes, Shad burned out his interior organs by consuming *sopa de albondigas*, *cazuelo* and other native dishes unmercifully cargoed with *piquante*. If ever a man laid down his stomach on the altar of love and prospective profits, it was Shad Carter.

Six weeks trooped by. Shad was now a regular attendant at the Ortega homestead, having imbibed sufficient *Español* to make himself a constant source of amusement. He told those peace-loving peoples how to skin a rabbit, how to tell the age of a rattlesnake, how to make headcheese and what to do in case the baby takes poison. Of a truth, he was making remarkable progress.

Poor Chico began to pine under the torture and wretchedness of beholding her he loved helplessly engulfed in another man's affection. He decided to have revenge. This is how he did it.

Day after day he got the big, swarthy President unrecognizably drunk and poured into his ear a wrathful condemnation of the whole gringo race. This in time bore fruit, for one night, when under the baneful influence of beer, the old man seized the unsuspecting Shad by the neck and in a gentle, fatherly manner threw him down the palace-steps, threatening him in courteous terms with a horrible end if ever he showed his white face in the palace again.

Three days later the outraged suitor was able to wear his hat and use his legs in the customary way. But it was only with considerable difficulty that his partner was able to restrain him from committing regicide.

As was only proper, Marie wept and wailed and grew thin and sallow at the non-appearance of her lover. This unexpected state of affairs disturbed the normal functions of Chico completely. He swore by the passion of his soul personally to annihilate his rival on the first dark night but, before he had an opportunity to perform the ceremony, the President's wife persuaded her husband to relent, and once more Shad was received into the bosom of the family, due apologies being made by *El Presidente*. To

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the mortification of the undertaker, the girl immediately got well and strong again.

The following Friday night, Marie shocked and startled La Libertad by appearing on the Plaza with the gringo, her mother and a servant bringing up the rear. The Plaza was crowded at the time, for the band was playing.

The conductor of this band was quite a character. For stealing the wife of a friend, he was sentenced to a five-year rustication in jail, but inasmuch as there wasn't another man in all Bogatavia competent to wring music out of the ragged, barefooted army of the Republic, he was allowed out of the calaboose three nights a week in order that the city might be entertained. At the end of each concert a collection was taken up for the unfortunate gentleman, with the proceeds of which he straightway made for a near-by café, escorted by two soldiers, and remained there until he had succeeded in drinking himself into a state of dreamy drunkenness; whereupon the soldiers carried him back to jail to sober up for his next public appearance.

There was no doubt about it, that conductor's life was a lovely mixture of music and Malaga wine.

When Chico saw Marie out with his rival, he was all contorted with anger. For a time he stood rigid as a tailor's dummy, his arms folded on his breast, his face the face of a Satan after an Epworth League Convention in Ocean Grove, N. J. Then he crept sullenly home for his knife.

But it had gone. Nowhere was it to be found. Not to be beaten, he unearthed an old deadly revolver, loaded it and returned to the Plaza. Ambushed behind a lamppost, the assassin coolly waited for his victim as you or I would wait for an order of corned beef hash or country sausage.

At last Marie and her gringo lover came ambling along. Little dreaming that he had both feet in the valley of the shadow of sudden death, Shad was whispering sweet sobriquets in his loved one's ear, telling her the old, old story that has kept thousands of novelists and short-story writers out of the poorhouse during the last few years. With a silent curse on his lips, Chico raised his arm and pulled the trigger. There was a terrific flash, an awful yell and a dog on the next block limped home with his right ear shot off.

It was a narrow escape—for the dog. Luckily for Chico he was never suspected, else they would undoubtedly have sentenced him to be a general in the army.

ONE night shortly after this unfortunate affair, Shad sat at Marie's white-slippered feet on the balcony of the palace, telling her in mongrel Spanish all about Carson City and spinal meningitis and skyscrapers and dried fruit. Then he got more ambitious and diluted at length on cardinal signs, cardinal virtues and cardinal red, including the reason why they eat dog in Alaska. Marie looked at him with her big shining eyes and smiled. And by those eyes and that smile the villain knew that, metaphysically speaking, the girl was aboard the lugger. Already he could see Dame Fortune emptying her cornucopias into his steamer-trunks. But, as usually is the case in this land of sin and wo, something happened right away that snuffed the hope and glory that had been shining on the rascal's path. It chanced that the conversation veered round to Chico, whereat Marie mischievously announced that she loved the little toreador 'cos he alone in that great city of seventy thousand souls was brave enough to kill four bulls every Sunday afternoon.

Shad smiled a cynical smile like that a woman deals out to her husband when he tells her that a man in a black mask with a false mustache held him up for his wages on the way home.

"When I am in Texas," says he with an appropriate gesture, "I kill four or five bulls every morning before I put the cream on my oatmeal. Bulls are afraid of me; afraid!"

That took Marie right off her feet. She had never suspicioned that gringos could do such things. For a moment she looked at Shad in wordless wonder, then a twinkle came into her eyes and she patted the prevaricator on the cheek.

"At last I have an idea," she whispers gleefully. "My father and mother are both anxious for me to marry Chico, one of my own people, but I want to marry you, my gringo. Therefore we will hold a bull-fight. Each of you shall kill a bull, be his own banderillero, toreador and all. The one that does his work in the most skilful manner and in the shortest time shall claim me for his bride. Of course you will win—you have killed so many bulls, and they are

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afraid of you! Five or six every morning? *Madre mia!* The ceremony will be held in the cathedral immediately after the fight. My trousseau has long been ready. You will find me waiting for you, scented, garlanded and decked with old laces for marriage."

Shad frowned and shook his head.

"I don't think that idea of yours is a very good one, sweetheart," says he softly, as he strokes her lily-brown hand. "It wouldn't be fair to Chico."

"I don't care if it isn't," murmurs Marie.

That was a beautiful thing for her to say, but its beauty was wasted on Shad and, though he pleaded for an hour against such a sacrilegious proceeding, the girl was firm. Her mind was made up and nothing would change it. Women do get that way once in a while. Perhaps you have noticed it.

Dubious and disconcerted and in a generally unsatisfactory frame of mine, Shad went back to the hotel to break the news to his partner. But Velvet was in no condition to be interviewed, having lost all power to keep himself at right angles with the floor.

Next morning when Marie sent the news of the proposed bull-fight to Chico, he was elated beyond words. There could be only one result to such a contest. Whoever had heard of an American toreador? Nobody, of course. He feared nothing now, and on the strength of the news Lopez, the money-lender, let him have another five hundred pesos at sixty per cent.

Fully confident as to Shad's ability, Marie appointed the following day—Sunday—for the great event, and ordered the palace servants to advertise the fiesta verbally in the highways and byways. The news spread like scandal through a Sunday-school. Storekeepers left their *tiendas*, water-carriers their *oyas*, and bare-legged women forgot their fruits and vegetables in the market-place to discuss the strange action of the richest and fairest lady in the land.

A FIESTA in Bogatavia is always a serious proposition, always. The whole blooming town goes on a jag. H. R. H. the President, joins his honor the mayor, the cabinet-ministers, the magistrates, the police, the army, the navy and the citizens in one common spree. Ministers, consuls, military attachés and representatives of other uncivilized countries are never invited to these select affairs.

About ten o'clock that morning Velvet came ambling into Shad's room.

"What's the matter?" says he. "You look as if you had been sentenced to be manslaughtered."

"I have," says Shad, following up his answer with a full explanation of the diabolical contest that Marie had arranged. "We're in the soup all right. I guess we'd better alibi ourselves off to parts unknown. This is a peach of a tribe of people."

Velvet drops into a chair.

"Not on your tintype," says he with a suitable oath. "After going so far, you're not going to let a bull scare you out of the right, title and interest to several million pesos, are you? What's a bull but a male cow, anyhow? All you have to do is to jab a few banderillas in his back and then stab him with a sword. Brace up, man. Take a few of these native-made whisky-sours before the show begins and you'll kill everything in sight, including the spectators, if they don't watch out."

"It sounds easy," says Shad, "but it isn't. I'll burrow under a safety-deposit vault, rob an old man, forge a check or engage in any other kind of financial malpractise that is approved of by the State bank-examiners, but when it comes to wrestlin' with Spanish bulls, *nix kom' 'raus!*"

Velvet got up on his feet.

"Come on to the bar," says he, taking his partner by the arm. "No man ever got anything in this world unless he suffered for it. Francisco Pizarro suffered in the snows of the Andes, Washington suffered in the snows of Valley Forge, Napoleon suffered in the snows of Moscow, Peary suffered in the snows of the arctic region, and Jim Jeffries—— Two whisky high-balls, please."

That was a big day for the two gringos. They got drunk three separate and distinct times. This is not an extravagant statement. It can be done, but don't ever try it.

II

NEXT morning Shad came slowly out of his alcoholic stupor, being very cautious to avoid the boa-constrictors that had wound their trunks around the bedposts and the Gila monsters that had flittered about his room all night long. When he looked out through the window he saw that the streets were crowd-

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ed with gaudily clad natives impatiently waiting for the bull-fight. Bands were playing and dogs were fighting. The whole town was gay with flags.

Completely unnerved, he went in search of his accomplice. But Velvet was nowhere to be found. He had disappeared completely; deserted his best friend in an hour of need. For a long time Shad sat in his room, holding his aching head and trying to figure out a graceful way to escape the bull-fight. Suddenly a knock came on the door. It was a gray-haired messenger-boy with a note from Marie saying that the time had come to make ready for the fight.

"You must win for my sake, for the sake of the honor of *los Americanos*," were the concluding words of the message.

No man, not even a coward, could stand such a taunt as that from a beautiful señorita. All inflated with amativeness and amenability, Shad grabbed for his hat and made one mad rush for the bull-ring. Bold and fearless, he stood at the stage-entrance and knocked. Immediately the door opened and before him stood Chico, a villainous smile on his gloomy face.

Without ever a word Shad stepped into the little low-roofed dressing-room. The air was heavy with the smell of cigarette-smoke and gore. All of a sudden a long angry bellow shook the rafters. Shad came to a halt, his body stiff, his eyes wide with terror. Through a little window he could see one of the *toros* — a monstrous black creature, shaggy as a bear and wild as a beast of the jungle. He turned to run, but Chico stood by the door, smoking a cigarette and gloating over his rival's agony with a mean, ferocious eye.

"That's your suit over there," says the toreador in an icy voice as he pointed to a gaudy bundle on the floor. "You'd better get into it *pronto*. The President will be here soon."

Shad shrank back in horror. His face was very pale and his knees were shaky. Five long minutes passed. Chico smoked on, glaring scornfully at his terror-stricken adversary. From the arena came the sound of noisy, excited voices. Never before had there been such a bull-fight in Bogatavia.

Slowly and remorsefully Shad robed himself in the musty, blood-stained garments of the profession—the short black coat, red knee-pants, pink stockings and bright red cape. They fitted him wretchedly. He was afraid something would split any minute. Chico turned his back to laugh.

Louder and louder grew the noise. Shad began to ponder over the life of shame he had led. He was very miserable and fervently hoped that there would be a priest in the audience to say a few kind words for his soul. Chico left the room, grinning like a Jap butler. Soon the band began to jerk out its horrible music. It was only a question of seconds now, for it is the law of the land that bull-fights shall commence immediately on the arrival of the President and his party. Just then the stage-door opened and in burst Velvet.

"I see you're all fixed up for the show," says he with a hearty laugh.

Shad flared up right away.

"I thought we were collaborators in this piece of nefariousness," says he with a violent objurgation.

"Listen," says Velvet drawing a flask of whisky from his pocket, "and don't get all tangled up in hostility toward me. I've been working on the game all morning and this much I have found out. You're not getting a square deal from Chico. He's going to fight a little bit of a young bull, while you've got to go up against a wild devil from San Juan province. But don't worry, I'm going to——"

The band struck up the national anthem, a cross between a Methodist hymn and a Spanish fandango.

"There's the President," says Velvet. "You've got to go now. Drink this and keep a stiff upper lip. Everything will be all right."

Shad took a long draft of liquor and with trembling fingers handed back the flask.

WEARING a uniform of yellow and green, heavily freighted with gold lace, and a Panama hat trimmed with a peacock's feather, the swarthy President, already under the influence of the juice of the grape and the bran of the brandy, took his seat by the side of his wife in the royal box. Close by sat Marie, robed in virgin white and decorated with garlands of flowers and pink ribbons. Her cheeks were glowing and her eyes were flashing. She was worked up to a high pitch of excitement.

In the rear were the cabinet-ministers and official hangers-on, all more or less fuddled.

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Last of all came the presidential bartender with a goodly part of the presidential wine-cellar in tow.

The crowd, a flood of rapturous, frenzied faces, cheered vociferously. The excitement was intense; it looked like a Democratic convention. Suddenly the band stopped and a bugler stationed by a door leading to the stables blew a shrill blast. Almost immediately the door swung open and into the ring came Chico, debonair and gay, bowing and smiling like Caruso after a short thousand-dollar selection. Approaching the President's box, the bull-fighter took off his sombrero, salaamed gracefully, and cried:

"Viva el Presidente!"

Steadying himself with the Minister of Agriculture and Education, Ortega stood up and lifted a glass of champagne high in the air.

"Here's health!" he shouted.

Then came Shad in his gaudy, ill-fitting habiliments, dragging one leg after another. His face was very pale. When in the center of the arena his feet failed him completely. There in the fierce tropical sunshine he stood, paralyzed with fright and streaming with sweat.

The crowd howled and yelled uproariously. There was a wait of several seconds and in that short space the unfortunate Romeo tasted the bitterness of death forty-five different times. It was terrible. Finally, at a signal from the President, the bugler piped out again and the young bull that Chico was to butcher rushed into the ring smarting under the prick of a steel-pointed rosette that somebody behind the scenes had jabbed in his back. It was too much for Shad. He gave one long howl of terror and fled from the arena like a man gone crazy. The people howled and shrieked themselves hoarse and embraced one another in their glee.

Stunned by the awful blow that had been struck at her happiness, Marie sat like a wax doll, her eyes all wide and staring, her arms hanging limp by her sides. She was a pitiable sight.

In a spectacular, melodramatic way, Chico planted the banderillas—long darts covered with colored paper—in the bull's neck and made many flourishing passes with the sword for the entertainment of the audience. Then, holding the weapon on a level with his well-trained eye, he stood awaiting the charge. At last the animal lowered his head and rushed at his tormentor. It was all over in a second.

At this point the official timekeeper came forward, pronounced the murder complete and consulted his watch.

"Ten minutes!" he cried.

A roar as of thunder went by. The crowd cheered tempestuously. Radiant with infernal triumph, Chico strutted across the ring and bowed to Marie, who forced a smile.

Money and flowers were thrown at the feet of the bull-fighter, in a terrific demonstration. A conquering hero, the day was his, and to the delight of all he started for the President's box to claim his beautiful prize. For the next fifteen minutes the dusky revelers kept the royal bartender busy with the corkscrew as toast after toast was given to the bride and groom. The fun was fast and furious.

All at once a voice in the audience shouted: "Where is the gringo?" and immediately the cry was taken up in all quarters. Then a drunken native seized a chair and threw it into the ring.

"Bring out the gringo! Let him fight!" he bellowed.

Immediately chairs, bottles, bricks, banana-skins and other emblems of affection and animosity came flying from every direction. The crowd was not satisfied. They had paid to see a gringo kill a bull, and they were being cheated. Having seen Chico's artistic work they now longed like children to see the fun.

DRUNK as he was, the President remembered a previous occasion when riot broke loose in his dobie bull-ring and wrecked it beyond repair, so he turned to the Minister of War and Education and ordered him to bring out the *Americano*. At any cost, he must kill his bull. But, before the Minister had a chance to get busy, the door opened and, to the surprise of everybody, Shad stepped boldly into view, his head erect, his hair fairly abristle with defiance. Amid the howls and catcalls of the audience he approached Ortega's box.

"Viva el Presidente!" he cried, fixing his gaze on Marie. But the girl flashed her black eyes defiantly and smiled at the happy little toreador at her side. She was hot with shame and indignation, and you couldn't blame her.

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Again the bugle burst out with its rasping music. There was a long pause while the wreckage was being cleared away, yet Shad never flinched. With a banderilla in each hand he stood calmly awaiting his turn.

Something had happened. The crowd sat spellbound.

At last the big bull shot into the ring, the big, wild-eyed monster that Chico had secured to settle his rival once and for all. The audience gasped with astonishment.

Bellowing madly, the animal tore around in a dazzling manner for a few minutes, then advanced toward the gringo. Silence fell over the multitude. Every face was strained and tense. You could have heard a dollar-bill drop.

Without the faintest sign of fear, Shad stuck the banderillas into the bull's neck and stepped quickly to one side. But the animal did not budge. He stood with his mouth open and his head rolling. The crowd stared with bulging eyes at the unbelievable spectacle. Time after time Shad swept the red cape over the head and shoulders of the bull, but without avail. The brute would not charge, neither would he move, and as every piece of surgical work in bull-fighting must be performed when the bull is on the attack, the amateur toreador was at a loss to know how to proceed.

"Kill the coward!" somebody yelled, "kill him," and from all parts of the audience came the same instructions.

Chico jumped to his feet, his face all black with rage.

"I protest!" he screamed, waving his arms in the air.

But his protestations were in vain, for the President nodded his approval of the slaughter. Gritting his grinders and grasping the sword in both hands as if about to make a Balaklava charge, Shad lunged forward. The bull went down with a crash, just as obliging as though he had known all the time that the heart's-desire of a lovely maiden depended upon his decease.

Once again the timekeeper appeared and satisfied himself that the animal was legally dead. Then, taking out his watch, he yelled.

"Five minutes! The gringo wins the ——"

His voice was drowned in a thunder of cheers. The uproar was simply deafening. Marie was transported with delight. A moment later the President staggered to his feet, took his happy daughter by the hand and beckoned Shad to claim his reward. This roused the people to a fearful pitch of enthusiasm. They waved their arms frantically in the air and gave one tremendous cheer after another. Chico disappeared, as if swallowed up by the earth.

III

THAT same night Mr. and Mrs Shad Carter went on board the converted tramp steamer *Esperanza*, which constitutes the entire Bogatavian fleet, to spend their honeymoon on a cruise to the Guano Islands. The whole town came to see them off, but only a few of the One Hundred were permitted to say their good-bys on the boat and drink a glass of imported champagne donated by Velvet. It was a very exclusive affair. Most of the male guests were drunk, yet there was no fighting.

When the shrieking siren announced that the time had come for visitors to leave, Velvet took his old friend Shad to a quiet corner of the deck.

"I was scared stiff the bull would die before you stuck him somewhere with the sword," said he. "Don't ever tell your wife I fixed him with strychnin before he went into the ring or she'd have us both lynched."

"I should say not," said Shad with a grin. "But you sure saved the day, Velvet. Be good to yourself for a week or two, then we'll hit the trail for Manhattan Isle with a wad as big around as the Hudson Tube."

Beaming with delight, Velvet shook his partner's hand and went ashore.

To the music of the band, the pealing of bells, and the cheers of the populace, the *Esperanza* steamed out through the moonlight to the open sea. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight for many reasons.

Two weeks later, all tanned by wind and sun, Shad and his bride returned to La Libertad and took up their home in a little house by the river's bank. That same afternoon the benedict stalked into Velvet's room in the Hotel de Cuatro de Julio.

"Hello, Shad," shouted Velvet happily, as he held out his hand. "You look fine. Let's have a drink."

"No, thanks," said the benedict seriously, "I don't drink any more."

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Velvet smiled.

"Did you get any of the loot yet?" said he, rubbing his palms expectantly.

"Yes," said Shad putting his hand into his pocket and laying a roll of money on the table. "I got five hundred dollars, and it's for you to get to New York on. You've got to count me out now, old pal."

Velvet stared in an amazed kind of way.

"I don't quite assimilate your assertions," said he.

"Listen," said Shad. "I married Marie just to get hold of her money, as lots of other fellows have married girls before. But I'm stuck on that little señora now, Velvet, and everything seems different. She's so pure and sweet and good she makes me feel religious. I've been to church twice today already. I tried to fight it off, but it's no use. I'm going to stay by the game and be decent. Course I hate to reform, but I just can't help it."

Velvet's face dropped, but he held out his hand.

MacCarn Fights

by Henry Oyen

AS PLAIN-CLOTHES-MAN MacCarn passed a tenement-doorway not far from the Bad Lands, an old man stuck his head out and said,

"Whisht, Mac! Did you know Red Johnson was back?"

"I did not," said MacCarn, recognizing Old Gavin, one of his stool-pigeons. "What's he doing, dad?"

"He's laying for you," said Gavin. "He's come down from the woods with a wad of money and a barrel of nerve. He's buying drinks and bragging about what he'll do to you if you try to take him for getting disorderly."

"Is he?" MacCarn's interest apparently was wholly impersonal. "Well, in that case I'd better throw him in the wagon before he says more than he can swallow."

Old Gavin drew back into the doorway, shaking his head.

"He's a big, bad one, Mac, as you know," he muttered. "And never has he been so big or bad as he is to-night."

"Much obliged," said MacCarn curtly. "I'll be looking him up before he gets any bigger or any worse!"

As he stepped along on his beat a new light was gleaming in MacCarn's eye. "Red" Johnson—at the thought of him MacCarn mentally licked his chops in an-

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ticipation. Their feud was an old one, and so far neither had turned out a winner. If anything, the credit was slightly on Johnson's side, for MacCarn, though he had law and authority to back him, had not as yet been able to tame the spirit of the gigantic red-haired descendant of Vikings.

Twice a year Johnson put in his appearance in the District. Between times he worked as a lumberjack in the woods four hundred miles to the north of the city, as a railroad-laborer and even—so it was reputed—as a safe-blower and hold-up man when the spirit and purse so moved him.

Upon his arrival there invariably followed a succession of riots and disorder that brought the Second Division into front-page disrepute. All the viciousness of the giant seemed to be held in reserve for his periodical visits to the big town. There was one fight after another. His size and strength made him a match for half a dozen. Cautious officers steered clear of him. MacCarn, intent upon seeing order kept in the District, clashed with him consistently. And now, after many meetings in which he had only held his own, the detective was forced to mutter:

"By golly! I wonder which of us is best man?"

Old Gavin's warning had been a battle-cry to him. He stepped along with eager feet, looking for Mr. "Red" Johnson.

"Oh, Mac!" a crossing officer hailed him. "Sergeant was along looking for you. Captain wants you down at the station."

At the station, in the Captain's private room, sat a shaky and much-battered man whose clothes betrayed him as a recent arrival from the country.

"I think it's a job for you, Mac," said the Captain, as MacCarn entered. "This fellow's been stuck up over in the District. Says they got forty-five hundred dollars off of him—he'd just sold his farm and was coming to live in the city."

MacCarn looked at the slight, middle-aged victim.

"Tell me about it," he said.

It was an ordinary story. The man had sold his farm in Minnesota and, with the proceeds, was coming to the city to live with a sister. He carried the proceeds in cash, in a big wallet. On the train he had become acquainted with a man who had offered to show him the quickest way to his sister's home. The way had led through the Bad Lands. At the mouth of a dark alley the newly found friend had suddenly knocked the farmer down, kicked him into insensibility and robbed him of four thousand five hundred dollars.

"Some haul," said MacCarn tersely. "Served you right. What did your friend look like?"

"Oh, he was a great big red-headed fellow——"

"With a blue scar on his nose?" shot out MacCarn.

"Yes."

"And a big, stick-out jaw?"

"Sure."

MacCarn turned to the Captain.

"It's Red Johnson, Captain," he said. "I heard he was back. I'll go out and bring him in."

"Shall I send any one with you, Mac?" asked the Captain.

MacCarn set his jaw.

"No! Not by a darn sight," he said. "When I go after Red Johnson, I bring him in alone—myself."

And with those words MacCarn delegated to himself one of the roughest tasks that ever came to his hand.

IT WAS no difficulty to find the big fellow. A few inquiries here and there and MacCarn knew that he was to be found in Oberpeck's saloon, a favorite resort of crooks, which faced on the railroad-yards. MacCarn had a faculty of suddenly appearing in places without any noise to announce his coming, and Johnson, lounging comfortably against the bar, was unaware of the detective's approach until he glanced carelessly around and saw MacCarn's gray eyes watching him from a distance of four feet.

For a moment their eyes met.

"How do, Mr. Officer?" said Johnson, with a nod. "Come have a drink."

"Come have one with me," retorted MacCarn, "in the Captain's office!"

Johnson shook his head slowly. He did not move. There was no sign of defiance, of fight.

"You don't want me for anything now, officer," he said. "You can see I'm as sober as a judge, and I haven't been in town over two hours."

"Two too many," said MacCarn. "Come along, now."

"Honest, there ain't anything on me,"

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protested Johnson. "Of course, if you want me to come, I'll come, but you're doing me wrong. There's nothing on me."

The man's willingness and obvious sobriety puzzled MacCarn. There could scarcely be a mistake in the farmer's description, however.

"Yes, I want you," he said, reaching out his hand.

"All right," said Johnson, "I'll go with you. You needn't iron me. I'll go willingly, because you're in wrong." He held up his arms. "Search me. No gun or nothing. But if you say 'go,' I'll go."

With MacCarn's left hand twisted in the big man's right sleeve they went out. MacCarn grew more puzzled. The man hardly would come so willingly if he were guilty of a robbery. What was the idea?

They marched in the darkness, down the railroad-yard, toward a cross-street till the headlight of a huge locomotive warned them to step aside. Then it happened. Johnson slipped in the loose cinders. His foot flew up—and landed squarely on MacCarn's solar plexus.

No human being could have stood up against that kick. MacCarn staggered and bent over. Another kick landed on his temple.

The lights went out for MacCarn. But in the instant that he lost consciousness he saw Johnson reach for a hold on the tender as it swept by.

IT WAS a long freight-train, and MacCarn had an iron skull. He sat up. A million brilliant stars were illumining the world, but in the maze of flash-lights he began to make out a dim vision of rushing box cars. It was nothing but instinct that brought him to his feet. He staggered and wiped his brow. The box cars continued to flash past. The caboose with its lights came before his eyes. Then suddenly MacCarn remembered. With a drunken lurch he hurled himself at the last hand-rail of the caboose, caught a grip, swung and dragged himself up and collapsed on the steps.

The conductor of that freight was a facetious soul. He stirred MacCarn with an ungentle foot and said,

"No Pullmans on this train. You can't sleep here."

The jolting of the train had shaken the daze from MacCarn's head and he leaped to his feet and looked around. In spite of the darkness he saw that the train was rushing over flat prairie-land. The city was left behind.

"How far out are we?" he demanded.

"About fifty miles," was the reply. "About far enough for you to tumble off and take a walk for yourself."

"So?" said MacCarn. "I guess not." And he showed his star. "There's a big, red-headed crook on this train that I'm going to get before I get off, I tell you those, my boy. Have you seen anything of him? He jumped the tender back in the yards."

The conductor nodded.

"We drove three hoboes off the tender back at Colby, but they beat it back and hopped a coal-car about the middle of the train. It's started raining, and it's too wet work to crawl out there and kick 'em off."

"Fine!" cried MacCarn. "And was one of them as big as a house and red-headed?"

"One of 'em was big, all right. Hey, Jack," called the conductor to his brakeman, "did you notice if one of those 'boes was red-headed?"

"The big fellow was," said the brakeman carelessly. "And believe me, he's some husk."

"Kee-rect!" said MacCarn. "And, believe me, I'm the guy who can tame 'husks!' It may be too wet to kick those 'boes off, but it's just right for me to make a pinch."

As his senses cleared and the memory of what had occurred came to him distinctly, MacCarn's usually placid temper began to seethe. The worst of it was that he had made a fool of himself.

He had permitted Johnson to make a "sucker" out of him. No green officer, fresh from probation, would have been so careless as to take such chances. And he had taken them, he, MacCarn, the wise one with twenty years of service to his credit.

He had got what he deserved. He would be the laughing-stock of the District for years to come—if it got out. MacCarn clenched his big fists. Well—it wouldn't get out! And he would get even with Johnson, too. Not as officer to criminal, but as man to man. Yes; he would get even; they would see at last who was "best man."

"You aren't going to climb over that string of cars, are you?" asked the con-

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ductor as MacCarn walked through the caboose.

"I can't fly, so I suppose I'll have to," was the answer. "By golly! I wouldn't like to be a railroader," he exclaimed, as he clambered up to the top of the swaying box car. "You fellows certainly have to take chances, on a wet night like this."

"Then why are you taking them?" gasped the brakeman. "You don't need to."

MacCarn smiled as he turned his face toward the front of the rushing train.

"Yes," said he, "I need to in my business this evening."

For up there in the darkness and wind and rain, with the slippery roof trying its best to shake him off, was an idea. It had occurred to him that in that drizzling darkness it would be impossible to recognize him if he disguised his voice. It was no trouble for him to do this. A few minor changes in his clothing—and what would prevent him from being mistaken for another hobo?

MacCarn chuckled as he tore the white collar from his neck. His shirt followed. Then he turned his coat and put it on wrong side out. He had lost his hat back in the yards, and now, well drenched with rain and wholly disordered, in that darkness he could very well pass for a tramp in rather hard straits.

An experienced railroader or tramp would have walked that slippery freight-train without trepidation or danger, but MacCarn's expertness lay only in walking beat, and he considered it best to crawl. There was no comfort in the process and little speed. Never had MacCarn imagined that freight-trains were made up in such interminable lengths. Car after car he crawled over without finding anything that even resembled a coal-car.

The rain became a storm. At last, hanging desperately to a brake-head, he heard voices almost beneath his feet. He drew back and listened. The voices rose occasionally above the roar of the wheels. Suddenly one burst out in furious laughter. MacCarn chuckled inwardly and slapped his thigh. He had finally found the coal-car and had recognized the voice of Red Johnson.

HE LET himself carefully down until he could reach out and touch the low car with his hand.

"Look out below!" he growled, and leaped. "It's too wet up there to suit an old A Number One," he muttered, as he picked himself up on the coal. "Where you traveling?"

In the darkness he was able to make out three shapes seated before him. One of them he knew by its size.

"Hey, you big slob!" he growled. "Can't you answer? I asked where you was traveling?"

"None of your —— business," spoke the big man, and again glee was in MacCarn's heart, for the man was Johnson. "I didn't notice anybody asking you to travel with us."

MacCarn scarcely could help from laughing outright. After all that he had undergone this evening, Johnson was falling instantly into the trap.

"No, you big dub!" rasped MacCarn. "I don't wait for anybody to ask me to travel with 'em. When I want to travel, I travel. Do you get that straight, you big farmer?"

Now to call a hobo a farmer is the last word in the shape of insult that may be offered. The other two tramps laughed.

"Don't you go calling me a farmer!" said Johnson. "You'll get kicked off so sudden you'll think lightning hit you."

"Go to sleep; go to sleep!" MacCarn's tone expressed wearied contempt. "Suppose you think you're best man here, eh?"

"I know it," said Johnson, springing forward. "Get back where you belong, you——"

A blow on the jaw flung him back whence he came. The two men swayed dangerously on the dark, wet, swinging car.

"Wait until the next stop, you big farmer!" roared MacCarn. "Then we'll get off and settle it man to man. If you trim me, you can be on your way, best man. If I trim you—well, I'm best man. How about that, boys?"

"Good stuff," said the two tramps. They had no love for Johnson. He had bullied them cruelly. The prospects of a fight pleased them.

"No noise here," they said. "We'll have the shacks down on us and all get kicked off."

"You're on," said Johnson. "They lay up for a passenger at Honey Creek. There's where you get the beating of your life."

"All right," said MacCarn. "Wait and see."

In the black miles that followed, the two

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men sat and cursed each other with a right good will. MacCarn strove his best to drive his man into a fury similar to that boiling within him. He succeeded. When the freight slowed down at Honey Creek, the pair of them fell off with the alacrity of a pair of wildcats going into battle. The two tramps followed, panting and grinning.

Then MacCarn stepped close to Johnson, and spoke in his natural tone of voice:

"That was a sweet kick in the head you handed me back in the yards, Johnson, and here's where you pay for it in full!"

"What—what?" gasped the big crook.

"Yes; it's MacCarn," hissed the detective, flinging off his coat. "Now show how big you are, how bad you are, how game you are! Fight for it! If you win, you go on with the boob's money. If you don't, back you come to do a stretch in stir. Oh, you've got a lot to fight for, you big stiff! Come on, and see who is best man."

A gleam of lightning revealed his face, confident, smiling. Johnson, with a roar of rage, hurled himself backward.

"Gimme a gun or a knife!" he screamed. "He's a bull. Gimme a gat!"

MacCarn pointed to his coat.

"My gun's in there. If you win, you can take it." He kicked the coat forward. "Come on," he said, "we'll fight for the coat. And the one who gets the gat—will use it."

Johnson swore, and MacCarn laughed outright.

"You big four-flusher!" he sneered.

Johnson dived suddenly forward for the coat.

It was what MacCarn had expected and hoped for.

With a catlike leap he had his opponent around the middle. Johnson's fingers were but a few inches from the coat-pocket in which rested the big Colt. But those inches were enough.

He strained and tugged, stretched and lunged to cover that tiny space of earth and get his fingers on the black handle. And MacCarn's iron arms held him—held him even—and squeezed the breath out of his body.

"You showed me a trick with the feet," laughed MacCarn. "Now I'll show you one with the arms!"

MacCarn had got his favorite hold. He made no effort to draw his man back or to throw him. He merely held him helpless and squeezed. Johnson, unable to reach the coat, sought to squirm around. And then the cold fear of defeat began to steal into his heart. He couldn't turn. The arms that held him were as unyielding as iron bands. He couldn't budge. And slowly the arms pressed him down to earth. His breath began to come in pants. He spent all his remaining strength in one last futile heave, and collapsed.

But the iron arms around him did not let go. He heard MacCarn's voice say: "Get back on that train, you bums!" He heard the whistle, the rumble of wheels, the noise of the passenger-train pulling up to the station. He felt himself thrown heavily on the ground.

He lay there. A kick brought him to his senses.

"Pick up that coat," said MacCarn.

Johnson stared dumbly.

"Pick up that coat!"

Dumbly the man obeyed. He felt the heavy revolver sagging in one pocket. He was afraid to touch it.

"Pull those arms right side out."

There was no disobeying that command.

"Stand up there. Help me get into that coat."

Johnson staggered and weakly held up the coat. MacCarn slowly slipped into it.

"Why didn't you pull the gun?" he taunted, with his face close to Johnson's. "Eh? Why didn't you pull it?"

Johnson turned his face away.

MacCarn raised his fist.

"Say it, darn you!" he bellowed. "Why didn't you do it?"

And Johnson said faintly,

"Because you're best man!"

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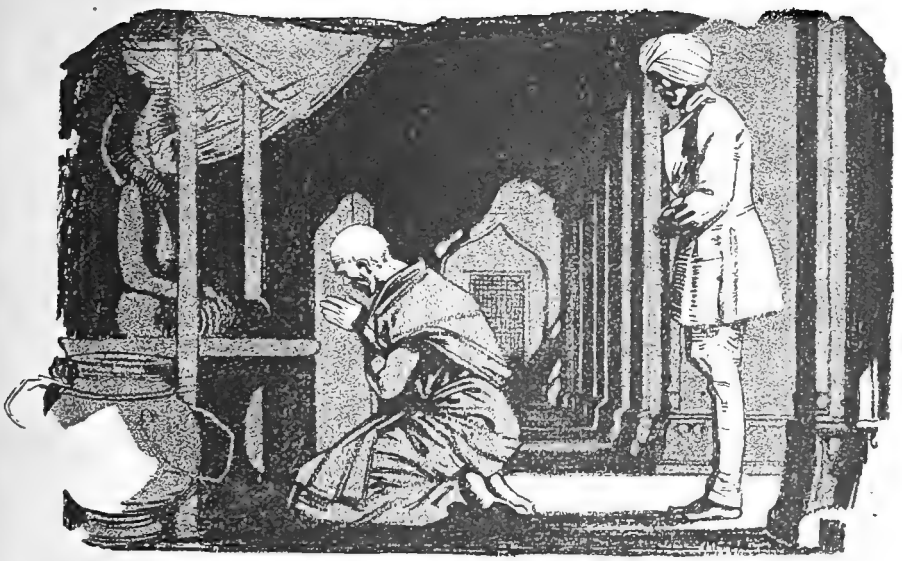

Lawrence O'Rourke -Buddhist

by Stephen Allen Reynolds

PROBABLY the most remarkable "stormy petrel" who ever lived is Lawrence O'Rourke, a native of Dublin, who tramped the roads of the United States less than thirty years ago, leading the life of a common hobo. Successively a sailor, tramp, sheep-herder, truckman, stevedore, and tally-clerk, he became converted to the Buddhist belief while ashore in Rangun and, after a five-year novitiate, was formally ordained a priest and invested with the yellow robe of his order.

Then followed his advancement as an elder, then to be Abbot of the Monastery of Tavoy, and finally to a rank which corresponds to a bishopric in the Christian churches.

Revered by the eight millions of Buddhists in Burma, enthusiastically welcomed in every Buddhist country from Japan to Ceylon, the bosom-friend of the erstwhile Dalai Lama of the "Forbidden City" of Tibet, O'Rourke is, if still alive, one of the best-known characters in eastern Asia. European residents of Burma know him as "the White Buddhist" and as "the Bishop of Rangun," while to the millions of followers of Gotama Buddha he is widely known as "Dama Laku, the Wise and Good One."

Humbly born in the County of Dublin in 1850, Lawrence O'Rourke left home as a boy, to become a wanderer. The lad was nearly starved in the streets of Liverpool. He secured a berth in the pantry of a packet-steamer, and in due time found himself in New York.

Several trips along our coast in a schooner taught young Larry that the life of a seaman on a windjammer was far from voluptuous luxury; so he gave up following the sea for the time being and decided to see what the interior of the country looked like.

He beat his way to Buffalo on a freight-train. Soon tiring of a dishwashing job in that city, and urged on by his inherent wanderlust, he boarded a "side-door Pullman" for Chicago. After a few weeks in that city, during which he was unable to find work and was obliged to beg his food, he continued westward.

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He herded sheep in the Choteau country in Montana for some time, and during the lonely watches with his four-footed charges, he became a deep thinker. But the spirit of unrest again whispered to him and bade him be on his way. It was westward, ever westward, to the land of his destiny.

It was easy for him to get over the railroads, for by that time he had learned the game. He knew how to "deck" passenger-trains, to "ride the rods" of all kinds of trains, and the mysteries of the "blind baggage" were known to him.

He packed California fruit side by side with Chinese coolies—he whom thousands of Chinese Buddhists were some day to honor by a great gathering at Singapore.

Eventually the young Irishman found his way to San Francisco. A man of strong physique, blessed with brawny arms, he had no difficulty in securing work at the docks. He admits that he drank as hard as he worked during those strenuous days, and that on dozens of occasions he made his heavy fists felt along the "Barbary Coast."

A captain of one of the Pacific mail steamships took a fancy to the powerful young stevedore and offered him a berth as quartermaster. Two round trips to the Orient ensued, but on the first leg of the third trip O'Rourke found himself "on the beach" at Yokohama, after a brawl which brought him before his consul and caused him to lose his steamer.

Shipping out of Yoko as a foremast-hand on a Dutch tramp, he was finally discharged at Singapore and ultimately drifted up to Rangun. He was offered a position at the Burmese seaport, and settled down to work as a tally-clerk for a British timber-exporting firm.

He had abandoned his old drinking habits and was in receipt of a good salary when an English pamphlet on Buddhism fell into his possession. Its contents fascinated him. He devoted his spare time to the diligent study of the sacred Pali language of the Buddhists of southern and eastern India.

AN IRISH STEVEDORE BECOMES A HINDU SAINT

THE simple but beautiful story of Gotama Buddha appealed to the romantically inclined O'Rourke, and the yellow-robed priests of Rangun were not at all backward in their efforts to win him over to the "only true belief." Night after night he pondered over the sacred leaves of the Dhammapadra, until he felt that he had indeed found the Noble Path. He began to realize that Buddhism was not mere idolatry; that the brotherhood of man and a pure life were its basic principles.

Straightway he communicated this belief to the priests, whereupon they hailed him as a brother and opened the Monastery of Tavoy to him. He submitted to the shaving of his face and head. He threw away his shoes and stockings and gave his savings to the poor of Rangun. Since that memorable day his sole article of daily apparel has been the yellow robe of his order.

At the expiration of his five-year novitiate the western proselyte was formally ordained a full-fledged priest. He was given traveling-orders by his abbot, but unbeknown to himself was watched secretly to see whether or not he was as sincere in his beliefs as he professed himself to be.

Lawrence O'Rourke, now named "Dama Laku," stood every test. He had mastered the Burmese and Tibetan dialects while undergoing his novitiate, and went from village to village on foot, teaching the gospel of Buddha and living an immaculate life. He was created an elder. Then, in rapid succession, came his advancement to an abbacy and a bishopric.

Buddhism has no higher office than that formerly held by the Dalai Lama, the Buddhist Pope, who, until Younghusband and his British soldiers forced their way into Tibet, never left the "Forbidden City" of Lhasa. And, as the devout Mohammedan must at some time during his life make the *hadj* to Mecca, so was every Buddhist priest above the rank of abbot supposed to make his pilgrimage to Lhasa.

The time came for O'Rourke to make his pilgrimage. Accompanied by two abbots, he took a steamer for Calcutta. Upon his arrival at the Indian seat of government he boarded a train for Darjiling, the military hill-station at the foot of the Himalayas, the present residence of the exiled Dalai Lama. With Sikkim followers of Buddha for guides, the Irish-American bishop and his party donned heavy garments of wool and crossed the lofty Dongkhya Pass into Tibetan territory. The guards of the Grand Lama had been apprised of their coming, and, within ten days after leaving

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Darjiling, O'Rourke and his abbots rode proudly on yak-back into the sacred city.

The news of the coming of the White Buddhist had been noised about the city; thus, when he rode from the great Cho-Kang Temple to the Potola Palace of the Dalai Lama, thousands of Tibetans followed in his train.

O'Rourke found the Dalai Lama to be a mere youth, well up on Asiatic affairs and deeply versed in religious matters. His ignorance of America, however, was pitiful. Beyond a vague knowledge of Russia and England, he knew next to nothing of the great outside world.

The stories of the White Buddhist from the strange lands and great cities across the seas interested the Buddhist Pope. He commanded O'Rourke to prolong his stay, and day after day for a period of nearly three months the Irishman perfected himself in the Tibetan vernacular and related wonder-stories of the western world to his host. So pleased was the Dalai Lama with his new bishop that he ordered him to Japan upon a mission.

The mission was a successful one. On his return to Rangun, *via* Singapore, the Chinese Buddhists at the latter place turned out in a body to do him honor. O'Rourke made a speech in the mandarin dialect in which he urged his listeners to throw their opium-pipes into the sea and to be kind to the poor. Expensive fireworks were set off, against his expressed wishes that they should be sold and the proceeds given to the poor.

After those days, Lord Curzon made an extensive official tour of the Indian Empire. In due time the Viceroy reached Mandalay, in Upper Burma, but found no one at the station to greet him with the exception of a handful of government-officials who were *obliged* to be there. The reason was not far to seek, for about one mile distant from the railway-station practically the entire populace lined the road, tendering an ovation to the White Bishop of Rangun, who was leaving them after a stay of several weeks.

For nearly half a mile along the dusty road, a double row of dark-haired young women extended from the entrance of the monastery. Kneeling face to face, two yards apart, with the crowns of their heads pressed to the earth, these women had unbound their hair and spread it across the roadway. And over this silken carpet, and down the human aisle, strode the bare-footed Irish Buddhist, secure in the knowledge that his chosen people loved him, trusted him and took a peculiar delight in thus honoring him.

CORPORAL McCUE TELLS OF THE WHITE BUDDHIST

MANY years have passed since Corporal McCue and the writer met in the regimental canteen of the Prince Albert's Own Regiment of Somersetshire Light Infantry. First, over pots of mild and bitter, at the Depot in Taunton; afterward, over rum and coffee, at The Glass Barrel, in Gibraltar, McCue has spoken of his meetings with the Irish Buddhist.

In 1885, McCue first met Lawrence O'Rourke; somewhere (if the writer remembers rightly) along the Mogok Tract, near the Ruby Mines, back of Mandalay. Shortly thereafter, McCue returned to England with his Burmese War Medal, and a bar or two suspended above it. He was enthusiastic about O'Rourke; and vowed that, when his seven years with the colors were over, he intended to return to Burma, and hunt up "Dama Laku," with an eye to a yellow robe for himself.

Whether or not "Larry" O'Rourke is still in the land of the living, the writer knows not. But that he really existed, and that he is not a figment of McCue's imagination, has been borne out by clippings from Calcutta and San Francisco newspapers.

Moreover, Harry Franck, the vagabond-writer, has met the Irish Buddhist, and has written of him. Franck has a reputation for accuracy.

And, as the various tales about the Irish Buddhist dovetail together nicely, it is quite reasonable to suppose that, "somewheres east of Suez," not many miles away from "the old Moulmein Pagoda," Lawrence O'Rourke, otherwise, Dama Laku, the Wise and Good One, is still preaching to the eight million Burmese followers of Gotama Buddha, with the brotherhood of man for his text.

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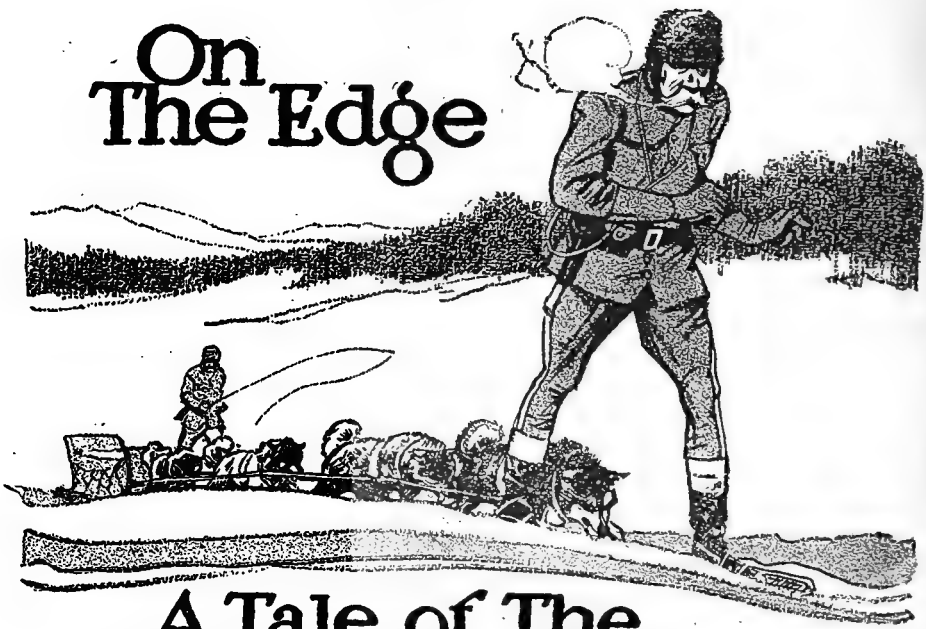
On The Edge



A Tale of The Northwest Mounted

by Ralph Delamere Keefer, late of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, and Stephen Chalmers

I HAD come off patrol rather later than usual. It had been one of those days when the sun performs a rapid arc far to the south. It was good to see the lights of Hootalinkwa Detachment of the Northwest Mounted, with their suggestion of warmth, supper and human company.

I found my partner, "Forty-Mile" Grainger, rather unlike himself. He had supper ready, but was lying on his cot, smoking steadily. He did not jump up with his usual cheery hail, but arose languidly and without a word. As I slipped off my "parkee" and side-arms, I noticed that his expression was very grave.

I pretended to observe nothing out of the ordinary about his manner. A man has his moods. And Grainger and I were as congenial a pair as ever worked a lonely detachment in the Yukon.

I glanced at Forty-Mile occasionally as we sat there smoking before the stove. Suddenly he took the pipe from his mouth and held it absently about four inches from his parted lips. His eyes were looking at the wall and beyond it, as if he saw a vision.

He came back to earth with a jerk as I shifted in my seat.

"Hear about Scott, Hammond?" he asked abruptly.

"Scott? Of Big Salmon, you mean? What have they done to him?"

I knew Scott well, having been on service with him at Takhini. A rough, happy-go-lucky buck policeman he was.

"Varian came up the river this afternoon, mushing for White Horse," said Forty-Mile Grainger. "He dropped the news in exchange for a can of beans. Scott had been queer for some time, Varian said."

"So! Will they have to send him out?"

"No," said Grainger softly. "He's dead. They found him fifty miles off the trail, stark naked, frozen stiff, with a rifle in his two fists and his dogs, all shot to pieces, lying in a circle around him."

I couldn't say a word.

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"The big silences got him, I guess," said Grainger, his voice low and gentle and his gray eyes looking beyond the wall. "Temperamental fitness should be a first test for our kind of work. But it isn't."

He puffed his pipe thoughtfully, and went on after a minute:

"I knew a constable once who used to curse all night because the wind moaned in a certain way among the firs by the river. That was the case of Pine. Ever hear about that?"

I gave a little start, for this "case of Pine" was, I had heard, neatly bound up with the case of Grainger himself, that time he "went queer" down at Beaver Lake.

"I'VE never spoken of it since," said Grainger, "and wouldn't now to anybody but yourself, Hammond. Scott's case brings it back so clearly. I can understand just how it was—with him.

"It was shortly after I entered the Force, just when I was passing through those stages that either make or break a man up here.

"I was on detachment service with this Constable Pine at Taku. It was unfortunate for me. Pine was the last man in the world to be hitched up with any normal human being. He used to talk in his sleep and mutter to himself in the daytime. Sometimes I would catch him looking at me in a queer kind of way, and on an average of once a month he would turn upon me abruptly and say:

" 'What's your name?'

"It would have made a frozen rock nervous in time, but I decided that if Pine were going the way they say madness lies, it would pay better to keep cool and watch.

"I had two years of Pine before the end came. You can imagine that to be alone with nothing but mountains crowding in for company, and with the long Winter and the seemingly everlasting snows, it was bad medicine for the brain. But loneliness was paradise compared with having Constable Pine for company.

"Before the end of the first year I had gathered some idea of Pine's way of living. Not far from Taku there was an Indian mission and school, run by Father Basil. One of his pupils was a Cree girl. Her name was Thlon-dah. She was quite pretty.

"Pine used to disappear Sunday afternoons and sometimes in the evenings. I was surprised one day when Father Basil, dropping in on me for a pipe and a chat, spoke of 'the inherent goodness of heart behind the rough exterior of Constable Pine.' The father could have knocked me over with a straw when he further informed me that Pine was teaching Sunday-school!

"But I thought I saw light when I heard that this pretty Cree girl was in Pine's class, and that not only was he teaching her to read and write the Lord's Prayer in English, but they were putting their heads together over Pine's ability to read and write it in Cree.

"About the end of the first year, to be brief about an unpleasant business, Thlon-dah died. What Pine may have had to do with her death, only God and Father Basil know. Others only suspect.

"During the Sunday-school period, Pine had improved somewhat—externally, at least. Prior to meeting Thlon-dah he had been the muttering, nervous, sleep-talking individual I have described. After her death he became worse than ever he had been.

"He performed his duty well enough. He never shirked patrol and he did his share of detachment drudge without a murmur. To me he was civil, no more, no less. We barely ever exchanged comment on anything outside routine.

"But about the middle of the second Winter his symptoms became so peculiar and so marked that I felt something must be done. I had no fancy for wrestling it with a maniac sixty miles from nowhere in the Yukon. He had a painful habit of getting up in the night and peering out of the window. Sometimes he would whisper to himself in a tense way. Often, too, I would come upon him with his head bent to one side, as if he were listening; and the greater the silences the more intently he listened.

"I reported the matter finally to division headquarters. I hated to do it, but, to be frank, I was beginning to feel queer myself. Taku for two years with a half-maniac would either harden a jellyfish or reduce iron to the consistency of pulp.

"I would catch myself lying awake at night with the keen consciousness that he was lying awake, too. When he talked in his sleep I found myself starting awake and trying to answer him. When he got up and peered out of the window, I would feel that I must get up and see what he

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was peering at, while common sense told me there was nothing out there but a howling wilderness.

"The worst of it was, I often found that I had reined in my horse on patrol and was listening to the silence, not even wondering what I expected to hear.

"You can imagine that I was pleased when Pine was not only relieved and transferred to Beaver Lake, but I was ordered to go with him. I could have done without the company of Constable Pine, but it was something more than worth while to get away from Taku under any circumstances.

"You know, Hammond, what Beaver Lake is—a space between two rows of shacks and another space in front of the Royal Northwest Mounted Constabulary barracks. But you also know Taku. After Taku, Beaver Lake is a gay metropolis. There were fully four phonographs in the settlement, even then!

"YOU would have thought we were a pair of hayseeds starting on a first trip to the city when Pine and I mushed away one morning with the dogs, hoping never to see or hear Taku mentioned again in this life. The mere prospect had made a startling change in Pine already. You would have thought he was as right as the Dawson mail.

"We spent that night at Halfway House and got on the last leg of the trip just as daylight was breaking. At first, Pine seemed to be in even better shape than on the previous day. At least, I thought he was."

Forty-Mile Grainger reflectively relighted his pipe. When it was going well he stirred uneasily and resumed:

"Halfway House was ten miles behind us, I remember, but the sun had not yet lifted over the jagged mountains to the east. Pine was plowing ahead of me, and, while I ought to have been grateful that he took the unpleasant task of breaking trail, I found myself watching his snow-shoe gait. It had a splay-footed action that irritated me horribly.

"This matter of choosing to break trail was one of the odd things about Pine. He always did it when it so happened that we mushed together. He fairly plunged through the snow, with his head and shoulders hunched forward, as if eager to get away from somewhere, or something, or somebody—himself, perhaps.

"Behind him, on this occasion, came the dogs, and behind the dogs I came with the sled. Around us, behind us and ahead, a barren white plain stretched to where the mountains towered against the steel-blue sky.

"I did not offer to take a turn at trail-breaking. I knew he would pay no attention to the suggestion, but simply push forward with greater eagerness. Also, I began to think, the farther we progressed toward Beaver Lake, that I would prefer being in a position where I could keep an eye on Pine.

"I know now that I was not quite myself, even then, but I was not as near the edge as he was. My impressions of things were correct, although somewhat exaggerated. He, on the other hand, seemed quite unconscious of his real self.

"He kept glancing from right to left. Occasionally he slowed up or came to a dead halt. Shading his eyes against the dazzling colors of the snow at sunrise, he would stare away across the plain in some tangent direction. Once he turned right around and looked blankly at me. Then he would go on again at a furious gait.

"I would have given a quarter's pay to have seen the shacks of Beaver Lake break the horizon two hours before they did.

"All at once Pine came to a dead halt. He stooped as if to tighten a thong of his snow-shoe, but his left hand only fumbled with the string while his right stole back and groped for the shaggy head of the lead dog, as if to reassure himself of some reality.

"'Mush along, Pine, mush along!' I cried, as offhandedly as I could.

"He straightened up with a start and, mumbling something, pushed ahead once more.

"Beaver Lake was still twenty miles ahead of us. For a couple of hours the sunlight made me feel easier about Pine—and myself. Then the sky clouded up and I fancied there was wind coming.

"We plodded on in the gray silence, with nothing to break it but the gentle crunching under the snow-shoes and the panting of the dogs.

"At noon we halted for a few minutes in order to swallow a frozen meal and replace the worn canvas coverings on the feet of the dogs. As we resumed our march I noticed that the animals were feeling Pine's feverish pace as much as I did. They lag-

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ged more and more with every mile they covered, and clouds of steam arose from their frosted flanks.

"Presently the lead-dog, a heavy Labrador, trod on the tail of Pine's left snowshoe. Pine pitched forward, rolling over and over like a shot rabbit.

"Before I fully realized what had happened, he sprang to his feet, a snow-powdered figure, and a Service revolver had mysteriously appeared in his right hand.

"With a maniac yell he fired blindly in my direction!

"The ball grazed my shoulder, but I rushed forward to tackle him before he could fire again. He, however, had dropped the gun-hand to his side and was staring away beyond me. I had an overpowering desire to follow the direction of his gaze, but I dared not look back.

" 'What the —— is the matter with you, Pine?' I asked sharply, at the same time disengaging the gun from his hand. He did not resist, but turned his eyes upon me.

" 'Hullo!' said he, evidently surprised. 'What's your name?'

" 'I nearly had no further use for it that time,' said I, as lightly as I could, but I fancy there was a weak wobble in my voice. 'What were you shooting at?'

" 'Somebody jumped me from behind!' said he. 'You go ahead. I didn't know you were there, and I don't trust you for a can of beans.'

"Having his revolver, I had less fear of him now. I took the lead, breaking trail, and he took my place behind the dogs. He did not talk to the animals, and gradually they slowed up. A few minutes later Pine appeared at my left shoulder, going at his former wild pace, head bent and shoulders hunched. He passed me as if I did not exist. Presently he was again breaking trail ahead.

"I was glad of this circumstance, not, as I have said, that I was afraid of him any more, but it made my nerves crawl to have *him* walking behind *me*. Like him, the mortal terror of being 'jumped' was upon me.

"Then, too, after having had his swaying figure and the friendly sight of the double line of dogs before me, the unbroken white ahead was playing strange tricks with my vision.

"Even after Pine resumed the lead, even with him ahead of me, the tricks continued. A bitter breeze had sprung up and its riffles and whirls were lifting the powdered snow from the surface of the plain and chasing them in dancing spirals around us.

"They seemed to take strange shapes, mostly of ghost-women in filmy draperies. They held out their hands to me, and it was they who whispered, not the flurrying snow-crystals. It was they who wailed faintly, not the wind.

"As you know, Hammond, even when one is in the best of form, the mind is apt to formulate strange shapes out of these snow-wraiths. Imagination is involuntary at all times.

"I could see that the snow-wraiths were worrying Pine, too; only he seemed to be looking for them, while I was trying not to see them, or, rather, to keep in mind continually that they were but tricks of the wind and my snow-blinded eyes and my nerves.

"The afternoon crept on. The sun went down, although I could judge this only by the deepening of the gray-blue light. The wind increased in volume and whine, and the snow-wraiths became more numerous.

"Pine, who was perhaps a hundred yards ahead of me, suddenly gave a cry, opened his arms wide and ran to the right in pursuit of one of the spirals.

"For a moment I had a mind to let him go, but I jerked myself to the remembrance that it was my duty to stand by a fellow-constable. I left the dogs, which halted at once, and overtook Pine. I tripped him, then jerked him to his feet and brought the flat of my gloved hand slap across his face.

"That seemed to restore his senses temporarily. He rubbed his cheek thoughtfully, looking at me with knitted brows. Then he quietly came back into line.

"Half an hour later he repeated the performance, but this time, as he pursued the snow-wraith, he cried in a pathetic voice:

" '*Thlon-dah! Thlon-dah!*'

" 'Constable Pine!' I said, grabbing him again. 'There's nothing there. We'll be in in an hour. Keep your nerve!'

" 'Thlon-dah. . . . Thlon-dah,' he muttered.

"In a little while the roofs of Beaver Lake broke the snow-line ahead. I drew Pine's attention to the settlement. At once he improved. Presently he laughed softly.

" 'I guess you drew a prize this trip, Grainger!' said he. 'But we'll dance a jig at Bald Peter's to-night—hey?'

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"For the rest of the way he acted like a normal person who is glad to get back even to an apology for civilization.

"WE CAME to the settlement and mushed up the main space, by courtesy called a street. Our dogs set up a yelping of joy as they smelled human and canine company. As we turned into barracks-square, all the other dogs in town were howling back. It was the pandemonium that has delightful associations of comfort, warmth and cheer after hardship.

"While Pine, apparently quite himself again, put up the dog-team, I went to the Orderly Office to report. 'Bleeder' Rathbun was D. O. that week. Remember Rathbun, Hammond? A stout, elderly chap whose main characteristics are a walrus mustache, a choleric temper and a good heart.

"He was in one of his irritable moods that night, just looking for something to vent it on.

" 'Very well, Constable Grainger,' said he, shortly, when I had made my report, 'I'll have to detail you two on guard to-night. You'll take charge. Mount at six-thirty—breeches, boots and side-arms.'

" 'Hold on, Corporal!' I protested. 'We've just come off a sixty-mile mush. This fellow Pine, to say nothing of myself——'

" 'I don't care a Siwash hoot if you're both in the last stages of spinal meningitis!' snapped 'Bleeder.' 'You've got to go on. The S. M. seems to think I'm a blooming Moses to make buck policemen out of straw. He's sent a special patrol to Nordenskiold and left me with only one duty-man in barracks, which means that I'll have to put the regimental tailor on prisoner's escort to-morrow!'

" 'It's a dog's life!' I heard him snort as I departed. I quite agreed with him.

"I went in search of Pine, in order to break the news. After a hunt I found him in the canteen. Although Service beer would not intoxicate a fly, he seemed in the best of spirits.

"It was like entering a blast-furnace as I went through the swing-doors of the canteen. For the moment I could sympathize with Pine. The laughter, the buzz of talk, the fumes of tobacco, the sight of cheery faces—it all went to my head on the instant.

"My brain seemed to take fire. My heart pounded and I was filled with a desire to utter a whoop, embrace the canteen-manager, who was laboring with pewter pots, and order beer for everybody.

"But I had a grain of sense left. Service beer might be children's diet, but the other things—the lights, the babel of voices and the warmth after the cold and that terrible mush—they were bad medicine at that moment.

"I walked up to Pine, took him firmly by the arm and almost rushed him out of the canteen. He was furious, with the almost insane fury of a nervous man. But I pinned him against a wall and explained a few things, although my own head was like a merry-go-round.

"We mounted guard at six-thirty. The guard consisted of Pine, a young 'rookie' named Wolff, and myself in charge. It was bitterly cold, so I read the Orders in the guard-room, where it was less painful to handle side-arms.

"Pine didn't look a bit right to me as he stood at attention under the guard-room lantern. His eyes, which had blazed with vim in the canteen, were fixed. But his post was Number Two, from 12:30 A. M. to reveille, and I thought he would be all right by the time he went on duty.

"After I had mounted Constable Wolff, I returned to the guard-room and commenced writing my guard-report in advance. I remember filling in the usual phrase, 'nothing unusual occurred.' "

Forty-Mile Grainger's pipe had gone out. He knocked it against his boot, but did not refill it. With the empty pipe hanging between his fingers he continued:

"PINE was crouched by the table in a corner of the guard-room, writing something on a sheet of paper. He wrote very slowly and in a labored fashion. His tongue hung out sidewise, and he presented the picture of an infant in the first throes of alphabetic agony. I wondered what he was writing—in just the way he was writing it.

"The room was illumined by a coal-oil lamp. The prisoners were moving restlessly on their cots and down Number Three passage one of them was mumbling in monotone.

"I was dizzy for sleep, but every time I dozed off my head went back with a jerk that nearly dislocated my neck.

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"Pine was still laboring with the pen. . . .

"I fell asleep finally, and it was past midnight when I awoke. Pine was sprawled across the table, breathing heavily. The pen lay on the board and his right hand was clenched beside it.

"I awoke him to the fact that it was time for him to go on his beat.

" 'Of course—why, of course,' he said thickly. 'Beats to the beaten—eh, old cock?'

"He did not look at me as he said it. Perhaps he was dazed from sleep, or lack of it. When the guard-room door clanged after Pine, I fell asleep again.

"I awoke with a start, to find that it was 2:30 A. M. Feeling conscious that I had been allowing my duty to perform itself, I buckled on my side-arms and went to make the rounds. The minute the open air struck me it was like the canteen over again. My nerves stretched taut, my heart palpitated and my brain raced over a hundred trivial things at the same time.

"I was in this nerve-racked condition when I reached Number Two Post and discovered that Pine was not on his beat. Probably he had crept into a corner and gone to sleep. Sleep was dangerous in that temperature, though I could hardly blame poor Pine for taking a chance. I decided to find him, replace him on post and forget to report the incident.

"But I could not find him.

"Behind his post were the stables. The door was wide open—an odd circumstance—and it was pitch-black inside. I groped my way in, but stopped after I had taken two steps. I could hear the breathing of the horses, feel the warmth of their bodies and smell the not unpleasant odor of the farmyard.

"Certainly a place to sleep, if a man's nerves would allow sleep. Mine, at that moment, would have impelled me to mount a horse and gallop—gallop!—anywhere!—as long as it would get me away from myself.

"I felt sure Pine was in that stable; yet the night seemed all at once to be whispering to my overwrought senses, *'Don't go in there. Don't go in there!'*

"Hammond," said Forty-Mile, glancing at me apologetically, "I once climbed a ladder to arrest four armed horse-thieves who were hiding in a loft and were just waiting to drill my head as it appeared through the trap. It was a joke compared with going into that stable. But self-respect compelled me to brace my nerves and advance.

"I did so, groping forward in the blackness with my hands. My shoulder suddenly collided with something that swung back and bumped me again on the return. I felt the object with my hands.

"I am telling you the truth when I say that my heart missed several beats and my blood ran backward in my veins. My hands, like those of a blind man, slowly outlined the shape of the object.

"It was a human foot.

"My nerve collapsed right there. The entire machinery of logic and manhood went wrong on the instant. I uttered a scream—I would not try to dignify it as a yell—and flung myself out of that stable, jabbering incoherently.

"They tell me I burst into the orderly-office and grabbed the amazed 'Bleeder' Rathbun with both arms.

" 'The stable! In the stable!' was all they could get out of me.

"I don't remember much more about it, except that my heart was crawling all over my chest and its beat was somehow caught in the tangle of my nerves. But I remember Rathbun roaring, 'Strike me dead! Is this a young ladies' seminary?' and ordering a couple of men to the stables.

"Then I laid my head down on the orderly's table and got my teeth into the edge of it. I knew if I didn't get hold of myself at once, I'd go out to Vancouver next day in a strait-jacket.

"Some time afterward I heard the tramp of feet in the corridor. About a century or two later, somebody spoke to me. It was Rathbun, but I knew there were others in the room

" 'Bite hard, boy. Bite hard!' said he, as softly as a woman.

"Presently I lifted my head. I tried to speak, but my nerves had locked my jaws in a curious way.

" 'What was it you were going to say about Pine when I shut you up?' asked 'Bleeder' Rathbun, eying me keenly.

"That broke the spell.

" 'He wasn't fit,' I managed to say. 'Neither was I, seems now! Had two years of it——'

" 'What was it—in the stable?' I added, after a pause.

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"Rathbun whispered with the others. Then he turned to me and said it was nothing—just my imagination.

"I knew he was lying. I braced myself, looked him straight in the eyes and asked a question:

"'DID Pine hang himself from the beam?'

"Rathbun looked uneasy.

"The truth might have been a blow to me, but I felt that my sanity depended upon getting down to facts there and then. I stood up, with every muscle and nerve taut.

"'Corporal Rathbun,' I said, controlling my voice with my teeth, 'as man to man, don't fool with me at this minute. Pine's hanged himself, *and I want to see the body!*'

"'Good Lord!' muttered Rathbun, staring at me.

"'I've got to face it,' I said. 'Show it to me—same as you'd do with a scared horse.'

"That seemed to appeal to the corporal's reason. Presently he slapped his thigh and gripped me by the shoulder.

"'That's more than horse-sense,' said he. 'It's man-sense. Come on, lad, if you think you can stand it.'

"I was doubtful if I could, but something else told me it was the only cure for my condition.

"They led me down the corridor to the guard-room. I went like a man to the scaffold, only that nobody was urging me.

"Out of the corner of my eye as I entered the room I saw a figure stretched out on the table where Pine had been doing his writing-exercise. I did not look at it directly until 'Bleeder' Rathbun brought me to a standstill beside it.

"Then, shutting my teeth and clenching my fists tight, I jerked my eyes around and —looked.

"It was Pine. He had hanged himself on his own belt. The Taku relief had come too late for him, and nearly so for me.

"But the instant I saw the material figure of the man, dead, my brain cleared, my nerves became quiet, my heart-beat steadied down. This was *reality!*

"Then a new feeling came over me. Two years, even with a wild beast, will breed in you a certain affection for it. It dawned upon me that there might have been some good in Pine after all. Anyway, he'd been my mate for two years.

"'You poor devil!' I said, reaching my hand to his where it lay clenched beside him.

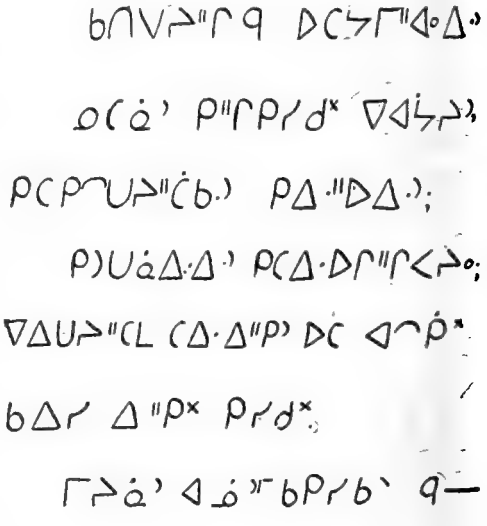
"As I touched it, something dry and gritty brushed my palm. I felt closer. It was a piece of paper. I managed to extract it from Pine's grasp and passed it to the corporal.

"Rathbun merely glanced at it and handed it back, saying:

"'That shows just how crazy he was.'

"It did, Hammond. That's why I kept it," said Forty-Mile Grainger, rummaging in an inside pocket. "And if I wasn't cured already, what was on that paper did the trick. I was myself five minutes after."

Grainger handed me a crumpled, creased, folded sheet of paper. This is what was on it:



"What is it?" I asked, after studying the queer thing.

"It is part of the Lord's Prayer, written in Cree," said Forty-Mile Grainger quietly.

He drew a long breath and refilled his pipe.

"No man is utterly rotten," said he, lighting it.

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The Grenadier

A Story of Mindanao

by Donald Francis McGrew

SYNOPSIS—"The Grenadier"—an American captain in the Philippines—takes command of Iligan, island of Mindanao, headquarters of the rebel outlaw Segundo. With the Captain go Lieutenant "Jimmy" Knox and Señor Segovia, interpreter, who proves to be Segundo in disguise, though this is known only to the natives of Iligan, among whom are the Señorita Carmencita and the good priest Father Jacques. Carmencita is attracted against her will by the Grenadier's strong personality. The Grenadier has just defeated a tribe of Moros in a pitched battle up in the hills, while the soldiers left in Iligan are attacked by Segundo's men.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHARGE AT THE FORD

AFTER leaving the enforced mass-meeting on the parade-ground, whereby the Grenadier had tried to discover who had shot at the Moros, Carmencita went straight to her home. She felt that she was being torn between her own conscience and her sworn loyalty to the Filipino cause. She called her tirewoman, who took down her hair, and, while she was brushing it, Carmencita plied her with questions.

She found the woman knew less of the affair than she did. Carmencita impatiently bade her begone, and finished dressing the hair by herself.

Still smarting with the affronts of the afternoon, she sat playing with the heavy braids, thinking hard. Finally she took several pins from her mouth, made a *moue* at the glass and exclaimed: "I am not an attorney for these people, then, he says; only an interpreter? Well——"

Here something in her own eyes grew hard to meet. She turned away from the glass with red cheeks. An angry little stamp of the foot accompanied the movement. She thrust in the remaining pins with vicious little jabs. Why should she care if he drew himself inside a shell?

She must not care—yet strangely did—and she scourged herself for caring or worrying about the cause of his coldness. He had been blunt, but never quite so distant before.

When she had inspected the back of her head with the aid of a small hand-glass, she picked up a soft piece of chamois and dabbed carefully at her cheeks. And in doing so she strove to meet her own eyes once more, to face this out with her own soul. One glance, however, was enough. She could not meet them, for, in spite of the grim face of the afternoon, which she should have remembered longest, she

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recalled the Grenadier as he smiled. She flung the chamois pettishly down and went out the door.

Running down the stairs, she heard Father Jacques's knock at the door. He readily accepted her invitation to dinner.

"It has been a horrible day," she said.

Father Jacques eyed his wine-glass.

"Very bad, very bad."

Suddenly she declared, "He is a brute!"

"Who, child?"

"Who else but the Commanding Officer?"

"Oh!"

"Did you think I meant any one else?" she queried.

Father Jacques raised his eyes, then dropped them.

"Didn't you see the tortures he inflicted on the people?" she insisted.

"I saw," he said, and slowly turned his glass. "I do not condone that—in a way. But I saw, too, that he did not act from a love of brutal methods, but because he found the methods best suited to his needs. He believed he was right. I am not entirely sure that he was not, from his view-point."

"Father!"

"Considering that the people broke their oath in retaining arms, they could not but expect to take the consequences. And, after all, he hurt no one—they were merely wet a little."

She relaxed. She had been on the point of revealing some of her knowledge and suspicions. If Father Jacques could see the righteousness of brutal acts on the American's part, perhaps he would condone acts of like nature on the part of the Filipinos. She decided, however, that she would not tell him what she knew, for the memory of the rebuff again stung her. She would not help the Grenadier—*ever!*

Father Jacques saw her perturbation.

"This afternoon," said he, "you would not tell me what you knew."

A long pause.

"No, father, I——"

Another pause, then the father said, "What has become of Segundo?"

"That I do not know," was the ready and truthful answer.

"There appears to have been some trouble between Segundo and Barong."

She refused to meet his eyes.

"Well," said the father, sighing, "it will all work out, no doubt. God keep you, child."

He patted her head and walked out, while the girl, taking one step to follow him, hesitated, and was lost.

"I'm a little fool!" she declared. She bit her lip, toyed with her fork, then laid it down in sudden decision. "I will at least determine that much," she declared. So, arising, she left the house.

HAVING missed seeing Segundo, she was still as much in the dark as ever regarding the impending maneuvers. Nor had she had time to question those Filipinos who had sworn Segundo was a prisoner in the hands of the Moros. This statement she more than half doubted.

If it was not true, but merely a ruse, then these Tagalogs had acted under his orders, and knew his whereabouts and perhaps his plans. At least she would find out what they knew. She hurried to a shack on the outskirts of town, where, mounting the rickety steps, she knocked on the door.

A smirking Tagalog welcomed her. It was an honor, he said, to be paid a visit by the Señorita Carmencita. But the girl, ignoring the compliment, stepped forward into the living-room.

She was surprised to find a dozen men present. Evidently a discussion had been under way, for the men were all seated on benches around the room, and a certain air of constraint seized them upon her entrance. Though the one swinging lamp in the center but imperfectly lighted their dark faces, something was in the wind, for it spoke eloquently from their attitudes.

The Tagalog who had admitted her bustled about to bring wine and cakes. Hospitality begins with the stomach in the Philippines. She waved the cake aside and, thinking candor the best course, questioned him at once.

"To-day you said Señor Segovia was captured by the Moros. Is that true?"

The man laughed.

"No—he is free. That was a lie to preserve his incognito."

"Then *he* shot Momungun?"

"Oh—as for that—I do not know."

This nettled the girl.

"Why are you vague?" she demanded. "Do you distrust me? Am I not with the Cause? No doubt you know that Segundo planned an ambuscade with Dato Batui?"

The men exchanged guarded glances.

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"Yes," they admitted, "we know one was *planned*."

"Well, did not Señor Segundo send a message for me?" she asked, her eye traveling over them all.

They looked at the spokesman.

"Señorita," he said, "Señor Segundo sent a message to you—yes. Since you needed to take no active part in the affair, we did not hurry to tell you. A messenger will be in to-night, acting as a deserter, and he will tell the *americano comandante* that he will show him to the hiding-place of Segundo."

"And into a Moro ambuscade?"

"Oh, no! That course has been abandoned. With all those new arms, it is quite probable that Dato Batui might move against Iligan himself. So that has been given up. It is merely to lure as many of the *americanos* as possible from Iligan so that their defense may be weakened materially. Thus Segundo's men will be able to take the town."

"I see," she nodded.

"In a short while we are to set out and warn every person in town of the attack, so that they may barricade their houses against stray bullets."

"You have warned Father Jacques?"

"We will, yes."

There seemed no longer any reason for staying, so Carmencita hurried home. Her conscience was vastly relieved. There was to be no revolting and unnecessary massacre. Calling a *muchacho*, she told him to be on the lookout for Segundo's messenger, and to tell her if the American troops swallowed the bait and left town. In that case she wanted the house barricaded.

FOR a long time she could not sleep. The incidents of the afternoon rose up to harass her memory. But finally she dozed, and dozing thought she had but closed her eyes when the boy awakened her.

"Have the *americanos* gone?"

"*Sí*—gone two hours."

"Why didn't you tell me before this?" she demanded, growing wider awake.

"I followed to be sure," said the boy.

Then he executed a few steps in ecstasy.

"We'll never see them more!" he exulted.

"What did you say?" she cried, suddenly chilled by suspicion.

"We will never see them more. When Dato Batui gets them—ah—every *americano* will be dead!"

Peering at him sharply, she saw that he had been drinking. She halted him with a hand on his shoulder.

"Do you mean they are going to be led into——" she began.

The boy, seeing his mistake, straightened. He had been told not to mention that to her. But the *beno* had loosened his foolish tongue.

"Tell me," she insisted. "Tell me all."

"But, señorita——"

"Tell me all," she repeated.

"You will not tell the rest of the town I was so foolish?" he whined.

"I will unless you tell me all!" she declared.

Thus threatened, he told the whole story.

"Get to work and barricade this house," she told him, when he had finished. He watched her apprehensively as she went out the door.

She saw it all now. Segundo *had* become afraid of her! She was not to know until the affair was over. And the Grenadier had already gone! She forgot the rebuff, forgot her anger at him, forgot all save that a handful of men—and *he* among them—were being treacherously lured to a fate worse than an Apache could contemplate. She flew to the father's house with remorse and anguish in her heart.

He threw on a robe and admitted her. "What is it, child?" he asked.

"Padre," she cried breathlessly, "the Americans are being led into an ambuscade!"

"But, child—why so excited?"

"Into an ambuscade, padre—oh, don't you understand?"

"But that is quite justifiable in war, Carmencita."

"Yes, yes. If it were to be Segundo's own men. Oh, father, it is the Moros who will meet them!"

"The Moros!" Father Jacques gasped. "Tell me, Carmencita, how and why—tell me quickly."

With many self-recriminations, she told him the whole plot.

"And I knew some of it before!" she wailed. "And now I have let him—them go! To be butchered, to be maltreated—ugh! Is that necessary to help our cause?"

"Child," said Father Jacques, "you *love* that man!"

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She did not answer. Perhaps she did not hear.

"You have done ill in that you did not tell me before," he continued. "But I can not blame you. No, I can not condone such an uncalled-for, barbarous act. It is altogether wrong."

Thinking of samples he had seen of the Moros' brutal handiwork, he shuddered and made the sign of the cross.

"*Judica me, Deus, et emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam!*" he muttered. "How can such a murderous act by paid hirelings help our cause? We must kill, yes; but the Cause can never prosper through unnecessary torture and cruel treatment, such as the Moros would inflict upon them. I am moved to warn the remaining Americans that an attack will be made upon Iligan also. Yes, I shall do so at once. Stay here, child, and I will go."

SOME time after he was gone she sat there fuming impatiently. Suddenly she jumped up.

"Perhaps I can catch the Americans—I know the trail. I am going to try it——" and with the thought she was out of the house and started for her stables. But she ran into a Tagalog some distance up the deserted street.

She was the *grande señorita*, and he was polite; but he was also firm. He wanted to know what she had been doing at the father's house, and why she hastened so. He was one of the men who had been at the meeting. Had she not been told all were to remain indoors until after the attack?

She grew haughty, but he was adamantine. "The *muchachol*" flashed through her mind. That boy had told the Tagalogs of his slip. Though she refused to answer this Tagalog's question, resenting the manner of it, she was forced to accompany him back to her house. Señor Segundo, he said, had given express orders regarding her safety, and he felt responsible.

Not long after she was left alone in her home, Father Jacques joined her. It was breaking day in the east.

"I went to my home and you were not there," he began.

"Yes—I thought to ride after the Americans. But I was stopped. The Tagalogs suspect me now. Quick! What have you done?"

"A soldier stopped me. I did not get to warn the Americans. They *have* been warned, I think."

"By whom?"

"I did not question the American soldier. He told me to get back home, as they were expecting an attack. He wasn't sure just when it would happen, but every man save those on guard is out on the outskirts waiting for something. There are whisperings of a Tagalog who was caught tampering with the American field-pieces, and he is now in the guard-house."

"Then the American *comandante* must have known?"

"It appears so."

"He *knew* and he went anyway!" flashed through her heart. "Oh, *bravo!*" Her eyes danced, her lips curved in a happy laugh, and she danced about the room, clapping her hands.

"Why, child, have you——"

"No, I have not lost my senses!"

"You do not know," she cried, running up and catching his cheeks in her hand; "but I *am* happy to know *that*. Now I am not ashamed any more."

"Now I know you are in love with that man," charged the priest.

"No, I am not!" she declared.

"Then why these sudden changes? One minute my daughter is for the Cause, and openly hating their Commander; the next she is——"

She ran up and put her hands over his kind old eyes.

"Please," she implored. "Was I not born a woman? And——"

She broke off, looking out through the dawn and listening sharply. The detonations of the fray at Maol rolled faintly in over the morning hills.

"They're fighting!" she whispered, going gray and gripping his arm.

A COCK crowed in the stillness. It accentuated the hush that lay over the town. Of common accord they went up the stairs toward the balcony to get a better view and, as they ascended, a murmur grew on the outskirts, and a blaze of rifle-fire reëchoed away to the hills.

Agitated faces appeared here and there at the barricaded windows. They called out to one another, but, as the firing grew, ducked from sight. The town took on an

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added hush in contrast to the furor at the outskirts. Curious children who had escaped their parents' eyes now galloped frantically back to the skirts of their mothers. Bars banged into place. A few Tagalogs who had not been warned in time and who had been out milking their goats now ran in terror for cover, leaving the goats to bleat and charge about the town at will. One of these fell under Carmencita's balcony. Bullets caromed overhead, sung and thumped and screamed down the streets with curious whining noises. They thudded into the dust, cut twigs from trees, smashed through bamboo palings, ripped with a vicious zip into brick and wood and stone.

Father Jacques, taking Carmencita's arm, pulled her back out of danger.

"We can do no good here," he said. "Best get behind these boxes until the firing grows lighter."

A distant whir-whir-thrum-thrum now added to the mêlée. They listened intently. If the firing came nearer, the Americans would be falling back. Some time elapsed and it became patent that the contending forces were at a standstill. Neither had the advantage.

"It does not seem that our men will take the town," Father Jacques observed.

"Can you still hear the firing up in the hills?" she asked.

Both listened hard; but the near-by roar deafened them.

"I think that it has ceased," Father Jacques next observed.

"I can not tell," she said, with an illy suppressed note of anxiety in her voice.

She listened again.

"No, I can not tell," she repeated.

Soon after, the shooting dwindled, then almost ceased. A few minutes later it stopped altogether. She looked at Father Jacques with a question in her eyes.

"Yes, I think Segundo has retreated," he said

"I must go and see," the girl declared, arising.

Father Jacques opened his mouth, aghast.

"Child, the firing may start again, and you may be hit," he expostulated.

"I am going," she insisted. "We can keep close to the church and thence get to the ford. If it starts, we can gain shelter back of one of the houses."

Father Jacques tried to dissuade her, but she was decided, and at last he said, "Then I will go with you."

Hastening from the house, they gained an alley which, at the end, widened into a clearing on the river-bank. On the edge of this an empty shack presented itself, its second story offering a fine view of the ford and the grove. They ascended the stairs and sought a window.

From this they could see the machine-gun detachment ensconced in a ditch near the ford, while down the line of Spanish trenches groups of blue-shirted soldiers lay and peered over the mud-banks across the fields. A trumpeter was distributing ammunition among them. Two appeared to be wounded, but the rest were rolling cigarettes and watching the front closely.

Not a Filipino was in sight. It was obvious that the Americans did not mean to leave their positions, but were awaiting the Filipinos' next move.

This came some time after Carmencita reached her new position. To the right a bevy of straw hats began bobbing in the cogon-grass and the coconut-grove. The American front belched out a line of flame, while the men at the machine-guns, throwing aside their cigarettes, went into action with a will and swept the grass across the river with lead.

The puffs of smoke, the blue-shirted men pumping their gun-bolts, the angry spurts of flame from their Krags, and the white hats bobbing in the distant yellow grass were clearly noted details in a spectacle that thrilled the girl to the core. The father had to drag her in from the window.

"You can see from a crack well enough!" he expostulated.

They searched for convenient cracks in the dry clapboarding, and watched the fight from these.

"It appears that our men have forded the river and mean to keep firing from the western coconut-grove," said the priest, puzzled. "That places the river between them and the town."

"Yes—ah, there are more in the grove now. And here come more Americans from the trench to strengthen this side."

Father Jacques still muttered, wondering. But just then a heavy fusillade broke out on the east side of town.

"Ah—he has outgeneraled them!" exclaimed the priest.

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"Who?"

"Segundo. This fire from the west is but a ruse. See? Our men are coming closer."

THE Americans below them paused. Hoarse commands reëchoed down their lines. They turned and ran to the east to reënforce those few men who had been left on that side, and who were now, to judge from their firing, evidently retreating. The yells of Segundo's men could be plainly heard, and the Filipinos to the east grew bolder and redoubled their fire.

An American soldier raced to the machine-gun detachment.

"Take hold and waltz that gun over here," he bawled.

They grabbed the rope and ran down the road to the east.

"That leaves only a few Americans here," cried the excited girl. "See—see—our men are coming to cross the ford. Here they come now!"

This was true. Concentrated now, the natives across the river smothered the Americans with their fire, and these began to fall back.

"I believe they'll win! I believe they'll win!" cried Carmencita.

But suddenly her voice broke and she clasped Father Jacques by the arm.

"Look—look there!"

Coming out of the hills at the southern end of Death Valley appeared a galloping column of troopers. As the last of the column swept behind the grass on the riverbank, some of the American soldiers below Carmencita sighted them. They cheered. Others took it up. The Filipinos in the grove saw them and began to fade away into the bosque. After a breathless interval the mounted men swept into view, laughing, cheering, discharging their pistols, the horses bellied close to the ground.

To ride in a charge conveys the greatest happiness that can stir a cavalryman's heart. "All the world wondered" why the Six Hundred rode into the guns at Balaklava. The world doesn't know. The cavalryman does. Somewhere deep in him is that untoweled, lurking, savage thing that made the Huns glory in their muck-strewn, hellish rides; somewhere in him is that wild spark that swells the breast of a fire-department driver as he drives round the corner rippety-bang on two wheels. If he did not have it, he would not be a cavalryman. Under the wine-like spell of a charge, men will ride into a literal hell, even though they know there is not one chance in a million of them ever returning alive. The snap of the leather, the snorts of the horses, the grind-grind of leg to leg, and the pound-pound-pound of the hoofs—wow! It gets into the blood like the whining whip of the Kourba's song coming across the dusk-swathed moor on an African night.

This was not a charge in the sense that the men were spread out in line with sabers drawn. They rode in column of fours, but it was a charge in the sense that they were rushing to relieve friends in a tight pinch.

Watching them, Carmencita rose to her feet, swaying unconsciously as one does who "pulls" at a heart-breaking horse-race.

The splendid swing and heave of the horses' muscles delighted her eyes; the swash-buckling tilt of the cocked hats, the elastic swing of the whip-corded bodies—all these combined in a rough-shod masculine picture appealing to her feminine heart in spite of the fact that these men were enemies to the Cause.

Enemies! Yes, yes! she cried inwardly. But, as her eyes returned to the Grenadier, something glad romped and rioted in her breast in spite of herself. He was coming back *alive*, and coming like the wind!

Under the stress of excitement the animals become spirited Arabians. Their manes tossed and their nostrils gleamed. Some of the men waved their hats, others fired their pistols at the fleeing Tagalogs to right and left. Then, in a swirl of foam, with men cheering and hoofs pounding, the galloping, tight-seated cavalcade churned through the ford—a roaring avalanche of khaki-clad buccaneers with the Grenadier in the lead.

"Yow!" yelled a man on the bank, and "Ye-ow!" yelled another close by. It went from mouth to mouth and became a roar that drowned the rifle-fire.

"They've won, they've won!" whispered Carmencita.

"Who, child?"

"Why—oh—he—why, *they*, of course!"

Father Jacques smiled and turned toward the door. In the east the firing receded rapidly.

"Yes," said he, "I think they *have* won!"

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CHAPTER XIII

CARMENCITA IS CHEERFUL

THE Grenadier rode back with his brother officers, listening to their explanations of the fight as it had occurred while he was engaged with the Moros. As expected, the guerrillas had scattered before the reënforcements.

"Had you in a tight hole, eh, Grimes?" said the Captain.

"He outgeneraled me on that move."

"You did well with the men you had. Good day's work all around, except," and he sighed, "we didn't get Segundo. And Segovia hasn't been found, either. We'll eat breakfast now, and then I'm going to find out some things."

Before eating he had the now sobered American doctor attend to the few wounded men. After breakfast he inspected the troops, had the Moros (who had come into the guard-house for protection during the fight) draw rations and placed at work under the Quartermaster in company with the Tagalog prisoners. Then he called for the scared guide and the Filipino who had tampered with the machine-guns.

The guide proved obdurate. He swore by all his saints that he had spoken true; that the Moros had taken things into their own hands and probably frightened Segundo away so that he took advantage of one troop's absence and attacked Iligan instead.

When taken round to inspect the natives killed in the fight he called several by name, but said Segundo was not among them. Asked to describe Segundo, he pictured him as a man short, squat, "thick in the middle," and bald. They asked the other man, named Anastacio, to corroborate this statement. But he could not speak enough English or Spanish to make them understand.

"Shall I call Miss Carmencita?" Jimmy suggested.

"No. Send for that *medico* Valero."

The man appeared.

"You speak some English, Señor Valero?" the Captain inquired.

"*Sí, señor.*"

"Then act as interpreter here. And speak true—or take the consequences. Do the right thing and I'll let you out of the guard-house."

The guide growled at Valero in Tagalog, but the *medico* had had a comprehensive and soul-trying introduction to the Grenadier the evening previous. He questioned Anastacio as directed.

The man stuttered, stammered and looked apprehensively at the glowering guide.

"He is afraid to tell," said Valero.

"Take that fellow away, then," the Grenadier ordered. "Now," when the guide had gone, "you come with me."

Anastacio was led to the edge of the moat, contemplating which he broke down. Sweat flowed from both Tagalogs before the Grenadier was through. He had the whole story in the end. He released Valero and sent Anastacio to the guard-house.

"So Segovia was Segundo and we had him in our hands and never knew," cried the disgusted Captain. He chewed at his cigar, frowning. The cigar rolled back and forth in his mouth, and his eyes squinted thoughtfully.

"This time it's got to be done." He spoke from his thoughts.

"What?"

"Better go down and look over your troop again," was the evasive answer.

He did not want Jimmy along at *this* interview.

So, when Jimmy left him, he started down the street and met Father Jacques coming from headquarters.

"FATHER," he said bluntly, "do you know that Segovia is Segundo?"

"Do *you*, my son?"

"I do. Did you know it all the time?"

"Son, I told you I did not know him when you first saw me. But afterward, when I met him with Carmencita, I found out."

"I beg your pardon. With Carmencita?" An uncontrollable twitch of bitterness crossed his face. "I am going to see her now."

"May I ask what you intend doing, son?"

"What I do not *want* to do, that's sure. But hasn't she known all the time? Hasn't she had a hand in this plot?"

"She took no oath, son," the father pointed out.

"True. But she has committed herself as an enemy and will have to take the oath now—or be served as I would serve the rest."

"You are bitter."

"I'm not exactly melodious—no. You

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wouldn't be either, if your chance had slipped away again."

"Your chance?"

"My chance for promotion, yes."

"Oh! Son, is that all this war means to you?"

The Grenadier looked at him, surprised.

"Why—looking at it in that light——"

He stammered; then shook himself. He was getting into the habit of stammering before those kindly eyes.

"No, not altogether," he said. "But promotion means a great deal to me. Why father—it's my *life!*"

"There is a great deal more in life than that, son."

"What do you mean?"

"Life beats through the heart. Ambition is of the head. Until they two beat together——"

"But I don't quite——"

Father Jacques smiled. "You will understand some day. Now are you going to Carmencita?"

"Yes."

"Listen, then."

The father told him of her actions, and as the Grenadier listened a smile that made a youth of him flushed and grew on his face.

"She tried to get away and warn me—us—and I thought——"

He stammered anew and could not finish. His uncompleted thought was that she, loving Segundo, had tried to warn *them*—no, *him*, his heart supplemented. But did he dare to hope that? He began again.

"I thought——"

"Go and tell her what you think," said the father.

So the officer hurried away.

SHE was not at headquarters. He found her at home. She tried to meet him formally, but there was the least bit of apprehension in her glance as she said:

"I did not think that you would want me to come down after yesterday, so I remained home."

"I intended to send for you a while back to question you about your part in the affair yesterday. But now, after seeing Father Jacques——"

"He has told you?"

"Yes. And I want to thank you for your intention of warning me."

"All of you!"

"Yes. And to say that I——"

"Yes?"

"Well, I don't understand it. I knew when I placed you as an interpreter that you were antagonistic to our cause—then later I heard—well that—you know—Segovia?"

"Oh!"

In a flash the girl mastered the situation. *That* was why he had been cool! He was jealous! He cared! Gladness was in her heart. But her eyes were well schooled. She grew exquisitely cruel.

"I was actuated merely by my sense of horror at what I know of the Moros' tendency to torture and mutilate their enemies," she said slowly and carefully.

The Grenadier's heart fell with a thud. He sensed, somehow, that he had lost ground; felt himself growing redder and wished himself well out of the door. He tried to collect himself. But when he whose head has been in the clouds begins to fall, he falls hard, and especially when his eyes are full of a study in browns and pinks and carmine.

"I hear you are liable to ostracism by the natives now," he said. "And possible danger. But you may have the post of interpreter for the Q. M. if you want it. I'll have to get a man to accompany me on the hikes. Of course you will be protected. And Segundo——"

"He escaped, I hear." She accompanied this with a purposeful smile.

"I suppose you are glad?" he could not help saying.

"Oh, yes. My heart is still with the Cause."

It was on his lips to say more. However, considering that he had made fool enough of himself for one morning, he left for the office.

But the foolishness, as he chose to term it, did not abate with the passing days. Having read him when so dangerously close to kneeling herself, Carmencita now reveled in a superiority that sparkled hard and bright above his state of confusion. Like a great many girls, she gloated in this and grew suddenly sweet to see him trailing so clumsily beside her. And the Grenadier, being entirely new to love, sweated and bowed confused before it, understanding neither it, the girl, nor himself—and always trying to understand!

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CHAPTER XIV

THE CHRISTMAS PIES OF CARMENCITA

TWO weeks passed by, and with them many changes took place in Iligan. As attested by the sanitarily drained moat, the clipped grass in the plazas and the clean streets, the Tagalog prisoners and the Moro freedmen had been kept extremely busy. Freshly garnished and free of log barricades, the church now housed huge gatherings at mass, which the Grenadier attended regularly.

The new quarters had been completed, and work was well under way on the supply-sheds and stables. Each evening saw a native band-concert in the plaza, while the tuba-stalls, frijole-booths and cockpits were crowded with dashing young Lotharios, lipping dainty cigarettes, and with laughing, chatting, loose-gowned squaws who smoked huge hand-rolled cigars. Many of the Visayan "aristocracy" had returned to the *barrio*, among them the *presidente* and his clerk. Iligan was again Iligan, apparently languid and content.

The *presidente*, Señor Carlos Garcia, proved to be a striking individual. He was pure Visayan, but was taller than his race, being thin, wiry, and, in vivid contrast to his swarthy face, had white hair and a white goatee. Like his clerk, who was fat and pompous, he was always immaculate in white duck, and both proved suave, intelligent men of excellent breeding.

They were expressive of keen interest in the Grenadier's moves for the town's welfare. They praised his attitude toward the Church, assured him that he had done just right in imprisoning those men who had broken their oaths, and were, in a word, emphatic in their professions of loyalty to the new flag.

So, indeed, were the rest of the town by now. Apparently the Grenadier's ability and character had left a deep impression on their minds since the mass-meeting and the fight, and they had become *americanos* to the core. The Grenadier and his officers were fêted, dined, made much of, and American flags showed in nearly all the windows.

The Grenadier, however, was not content. He took their protestations with a mental grain of salt. Too, the bottom of the campaign seemed to have suddenly dropped out. Hikes, drills, details of construction and the punishment of a few Tagalogs caught trying to smuggle supplies through the outposts filled his days with action, but underneath was a gnawing discontent, for Segundo had escaped him and dropped out of sight.

He had not come merely to police Iligan and build a new post. He had come after Segundo, and wanted him badly. A glance at the hills maddened him. Where in their wooded distances could Segundo be, and would the chance come again to get at him? Word came once that the troops at Oroquito had encountered a small body of his men, but beyond that, oblivion.

But one satisfying bit of news reached him; Segundo had been cut off from supplies at Oroquito, Dapitan and Cagayan, and for that reason he would be forced to rely on the Iligan district alone. Therefore it behooved him now to exert an added vigilance in an effort to block him from supplies here.

He was, however, handicapped by a shortage of men. Only one or two nights intervened between guard-duties now. As the outposts were necessarily far apart, many chances afforded themselves to the smugglers to slip by the intervening patrols. While a few had been caught and treated to the water-cure in an effort to get information against the chief smuggler, whom the Grenadier more than half believed to be Sun Tung, no conclusive evidence had been obtained against him. Sun Tung went on "hitting his pipe" in peace, and Segundo remained at large.

"I ought to jail Sun Tung on suspicion," he remarked to Jimmy. "But that wouldn't do."

"No. We have to be open and aboveboard."

"Always."

"I see that doctor has filed a complaint against you."

"Let him."

"And I don't think you ought to have mentioned the water-cure and those Moro women in that report. What they don't know in Manila won't hurt them."

"Didn't you just say something about being open and aboveboard?"

Jimmy's eyes opened. He opened his mouth to retort, thought better of it and changed the subject.

"Well, said he, "we will have a good Christmas dinner, from what I learn at the

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quarters, at any rate. That's one consolation."

"Yes. I consoled Todd to the tune of ten dollars to help out on that affair, too. The only drawback that appears now is—we haven't got any turkeys."

"Why, Garcia has some, I believe."

"I'll have to see what I can do with him, then."

SOON after, Jimmy went out, leaving the Grenadier to his thoughts. And these, in spite of the fact that the inner man is always an interesting subject, went back into what were becoming regular channels. He wanted Segundo and promotion, but he was prone to believe that he wanted Carmencita infinitely more.

Carmencita! The name ran through his thoughts hourly, daily, and in his dreams at night. He found himself seeking her company more than his stubborn pride condoned.

Occasionally she permitted him to accompany her home, and on these walks she talked openly, skilfully, quite impersonally, though often he found himself led into talking of himself. Through these fragmentary admissions she learned a great deal of his life and hopes and aims, as well as through talks with Father Jacques, with whom the Grenadier was more open.

The subject of Segundo proved a stumbling-block in their conversations occasionally, for, of course, he refrained through delicacy from mentioning the name of his rival, while she in turn was content to let Segundo remain in the background.

One thing the Grenader quickly ascertained. She had delved in worth-while books to an extent far exceeding his own. This discovery was gratifying in that it vindicated what he was pleased to call his judgment. She would grace his home. As for her, she was playing with fire, and knew it, and delighted in it. An added bloom touched her cheeks, new delicious notes of laughter broke through her words, and the Grenadier was caught firmly and ever more firmly in the toils daily.

BUT if he worried, K Troop did not. Todd was in the "cook-shack." The man killed at Maol had been first cook, and Todd, whose nose grew eloquent over a frying-pan, had been detailed in his place. K Troop was reveling in dishes new, enticing and wonderful.

Todd's first move had been made with an eye to the nearing Christmas. In view of that impending feast-day, he stirred the troop in a burst of oratory to contribute two dollars a man for "extras" toward "the best dinner that had ever stretched K Troop's belt," and the troop, complying with a whoop, looked forward to a dinner that would paint that Christmas red on the calendar of the Troop's history.

From Manila came the supplies, and so, the day before Christmas, Todd and the second cook stood contemplating an assortment of high-piled cans in conscious approval. There was celery, there were nuts of every description, there were oysters, dates, mince-meat, figs, raisins, sausages, pumpkins and cranberries. Over on another table, alongside the vegetables, some twenty chickens lay picked and cleaned and ready for the pots.

"We want to be darned sure we get it all," said Todd, eying each article. "It seems to me there's something missing, though."

"There couldn't be, in that mess," McLane sighed happily.

"Yes, there is. *Tell* you what it is. We ain't got no pies or cakes!"

"Well, how in thunder are we going to get them? That's where we both fall down, in the pastry-line. We can't bake them."

"Can't go without our pies, boy. *Tell* you what." Todd was already slipping out of his apron. "I'm going over to that Señorita Carmencita and see if she's got a cook-book. I *'low* we'll get those cakes!"

"She'll run you out."

"Me? When I get on my Piccadilly manners, I'm a regular charmer. You watch me."

"But she's up to headquarters."

"Naw—she's home. Saw her."

Carmencita listened with a smile to Todd's appeal, but was unable to supply the needed cook-book.

"But if you'll allow me," she said with a quick twinkling of the eye, "I'll come over and show you how to bake them."

"Allow you? Madam, we'll appreciate that more than we can say. We'll do all the work if you'll just show us how."

"I'll be over in just a few moments."

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HURRYING up-stairs, she donned a starched apron and a jaunty little house-cap, and thus prepared started for the troop-kitchen. But on the *calle* she met Señor Garcia. She smiled perfunctorily in response to his bow and would have passed on, for the high-caste Filipinos, though treating her with the same deference and respect as of yore when in the presence of the Americans, were exceptionally cool toward her when alone. Even the yokels frowned at her, for they distrusted her, and only Segundo's known sentiment toward her kept her from harm. So she would have passed on had not Garcia, first looking up and down the street, quickly passed her a letter.

"From Segundo," he said.

"Is that all?" she asked as she thrust it in her bosom.

"The señorita's actions of late have not met with approval in the eyes of the true patriots," he answered. "Señor Segundo wishes you let alone. But I am sure that no one will in the future be indiscreet enough to tell you any more plans of the Cause."

"As you will," she retorted, with a toss of her head. "I warn you I will not stand by and see Moros commit unspeakable trocities where there is no occasion for it."

"All ambuscades are fair in war," he said.

"But not torture and butcheries by savage hirelings," she retorted.

The Grenadier appeared at this moment, from the direction of headquarters. Garcia's frown changed to a smile. Carmencita left them together and went on, and on the way quickly pulled the missive from its hiding-place and opened it.

At the first words she gasped. Garcia had made a mistake, for the terse and concise message in the blank envelope was not addressed to her, but to Garcia himself, and contained explicit directions for the deliverance of a train-load of supplies to one of Segundo's lieutenants that same evening. Sun Tung was to handle the expedition in person, and the delivery to be made near Señor Garcia's home.

She thought instantly of going back to reveal Garcia's mistake. A glance back proved that now was not the time to do so, the Grenadier being still with him, so she thrust the letter back and went on to the barracks. She would tell Garcia that evening.

"Now," said Todd as he saw her approaching, "you cook's police, you remember that as long as she's here this shack remains a regular sanctum of modicum and decorum—savvy?"

"We savvy," they grunted.

"Here comes the Old Man up the street, too," said one.

"Well, he won't bite us. Ah—we're all ready for you, señorita."

Immediately the girl took cognizance of the stock of pans, fruits, mince-meat and flour and, with Todd and the rest holding the pans, she stood over the flour-barrel with a measure and doled out the requisite amount for each batch of pie-batter. Absorbed in this, she did not hear the approach of the Grenadier until the men came abruptly to attention. Then she looked over her shoulder at him as he stood there, regarding her in amused amazement.

"You're delaying the process," she said with a faint smile.

The Grenadier nodded at the men to continue.

"What are you making?" he asked Todd.

"Pies and cakes, sir, for the dinner."

The officer raised his eyebrows and Todd resumed his work. There was really no excuse for the Captain remaining about the kitchen for any length of time, as assuredly it did not become his rank, but somehow an irresistible longing to remain at least a little while stole over him.

It was good to look at her. A tiny flake of flour on one cheek enhanced by contrast its bloom, and, encased as she was in the gray-checked apron, with delicious glimpses of her hair showing beneath the cap, she awakened alluring views of a future home that pulled oddly at his heart-strings. He leaned for the moment against a bench, not noticing his proximity to one batch of oozy dough, and stood tapping his boot with a gentle crop while his cigar died between his teeth and his eyes watched the play of her fingers.

THE Grenadier thought the men unaware of his state of heart, nor did he want to occasion talk, so in order to countenance his remaining in the eyes of the men he realized that he must invent some plausible topic for conversation.

"Todd," said he, "did you get all the chickens?"

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"Yes, sir. Twenty of them."

"I was figuring on a turkey for to-morrow's dinner; but I guess I'll have to be thankful for chicken."

"Why, so was I," put in Carmencita. "But I found I couldn't get any. The only turkeys in town are owned by Señor Garcia."

"So I found out. I just made him an offer—and what do you think he wants?"

"How much?"

"Ten dollars apiece."

"Ten—dollars—apiece!" exclaimed Todd, who forgot himself in amazement. "Why, the piebald——"

"Tut, tut." The Grenadier, however, grinned in spite of himself. "That's what he said—ten dollars apiece."

"How many has he, sir?"

"Five."

"Next thing he'll be starting a clothing-store," muttered Todd. He gave his batch of dough a reflective and vicious flop. "Too bad you couldn't get one, sir," he said aloud. "But I'll have a chicken for you, at any rate."

The Grenadier nodded and straightened to leave. He could invent no excuse to remain further. His movement was accompanied by a suspicious drip-drip. He looked down, and ruefully contemplated a mess of sticky dough sliding down the polished length of his riding-boot. Then he caught Carmencita's roguish eye upon him.

"Let me have a knife, Todd," he said.

"Yes, sir."

But Carmencita took the knife from Todd's hand. "Mr. Todd will be extremely busy for the next five minutes," she said. "Put your foot on this bench."

"Why, I can scrape it off myself."

"Put your foot on this bench!" said her eyes; and he did so, feeling a bit foolish, yet confusedly pleased. As he turned she exclaimed, "You've got some on the back of your blouse, too."

She scraped at that, and then, as she returned to the boot, she looked suddenly up from her bent position and whispered,

"You need a guardian to take care of you!"

She looked swiftly down again; the Grenadier gasped. He looked quickly to ascertain if the men had heard. Evidently they had not. A warm and altogether delicious tremor passed through him. Her shoulder almost brushed his, while her profile, dangerously close, presented a maddening view of kissable cheeks and kissable ears and a glimpse of soft tresses from which an aroma, indefinable and soul-trying beat up into his face.

He had but to bend slightly——

He looked again at the men, giving way to sudden irresistible impulse. For the veriest instant his lips brushed her ear, in the hint of a caress so fleeting, so soft as to be almost unfelt, yet expressing in it a reverence matched only by the depths of his deep longing.

She said nothing, but looked at him—just an instant—from under her lashes. Following the first flood of color, her face, like her eyes, grew grave. There was no laughter in her gaze now. He could not fathom it, and was glad when she dropped her eyes, for he was in a panic. And when she stood up and said, "There, you are more presentable now," the Grenadier muttered inarticulate thanks and left with very red cheeks indeed.

Once outside, however, his heart began to sing. "You need a guardian!"

He knew, of course, that her statement had been inadvertent and meaningless, but her sudden impulsive and roguish show of mothering intimacy bade his heart rejoice, for it went for a letting down of the barrier she had erected, and that night, he swore, he would go to her and break the barrier completely down.

That kiss! Why he had yielded to that he did not know—nor care, just now. She had for the moment swept him away from his moorings, he reasoned, but to-night he would take himself in hand and win her completely over. He could hardly wait, however, for the moment to arrive.

CARMENCITA, too, was in a state of perturbation beneath her contained exterior. She realized that some imp had inspired her to play too far with a fire that might in the end engulf her, and maidenly fears disturbed her breast the remainder of the afternoon. But this seemed to have no effect on her ability to direct the cooks' flying fingers, and that evening before she left, K Troop was assured a feast of pies and cakes never equaled before in the memories of its oldest members. And she felt that their sincere, if awkward, thanks more than repaid her for the efforts charged against their account.

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A few feet from the quarters a frown appeared on her brow. Half fearing to meet the Grenadier, she hurried to her home. But he was not at the moment uppermost in her thoughts. Garcia's letter was still to be returned. Since she knew it to be perfectly legitimate in times of war to smuggle supplies, she intended making no use of the information she had accidentally gained and, though sending a *muchacho* at first suggested itself, she decided to take it personally, in order to insure its ultimate delivery.

So after the evening meal she set out, telling her tirewoman she would be back in an hour. Thus it was that the Grenadier, coming to see her, missed her by ten minutes. The tirewoman mentioned the return in an hour, so, determining to return, the Grenadier set out for a round of the outposts.

Carmencita's way took her along a grass-choked corduroy road leading through mucky *potreros*, paddies and cogon-patches to a house some distance to the left of the outermost southern outpost. The latter was on the river-bank, directly across from the Valley of Death. As the space between Garcia's home and the foot-hills on the east side of the river was made up almost entirely of rice-paddies, the Commander had chosen the spot on the bank as the best place for his outpost, as from that point on the river was harder to ford. Though he deplored the lack of men, he was forced to choose the lesser of two evils and be content with intervening patrols for the guarding of the open spaces.

Carmencita was halted by one of these patrols, and passed, and in a moment she reached Garcia's home.

He received her alone. "I am honored, señorita," was his perfunctory greeting.

But his eyes searched hers curiously.

She took the letter from her breast and handed it to him.

"You made a mistake, señor," she said.

The color heightened in his cheeks. For a space he said nothing, looking from her to the letter.

Then, "Why did you say nothing before?" he asked sharply.

Briefly she explained.

"Your letter is at my office," said Garcia. "I merely translated the directions to Sun Tung and threw the note aside. By mistake I placed it in this envelope, which, since it was unaddressed, I thought yours."

"I am glad it is rectified now," said Carmencita, at the same time stepping toward the door. "I will bid you—why, what is the matter, señor?"

He had stepped to the door and locked it.

"It would be best for the señorita to compose herself for an hour—for two—perhaps three hours. See, here are books, or the Señora Garcia would be glad to——"

"Am I to stay here against my will?"

"I am sorry," he added.

"Oh! *Madre de Dios*—do you think I would inform the Americans of this matter?"

"The señorita has said it."

She was too angry to speak for the moment.

"The señorita's known sentiment for the *americano comandante* might lead her to let something slip," he went on.

"My sentiment?" she cried, flushing hotly. "Who knows of my sentiment? And oh—you are indeed sillier than one would expect to find you, knowing your years. Why should I come with the message voluntarily if——"

"But would I not have discovered the error in the morning?" he pointed out.

"What, then, will hinder me from revealing the names of the smugglers after you release me?" she retorted.

There was a flash of nobility showing through the theatrical intensity of his answer.

"What if you do? Has not more than one man given up his life or his freedom for the Cause? A man can do but that, and after the supplies have gone through——"

She moved resignedly to a chair.

"I but mentioned that possibility in trying to point out the foolishness of your detaining me," she said. "I do not want to tell—had I wished to, I would have gone at once to the *comandante*."

"And paid forfeit with your life! Shall I call the señora?"

"*Muchas gracias*—please do not trouble her."

She picked up a book in preference to the company of the madam, as that worthy dame, a patriot to the core, had been caustic in her denunciation of Carmencita's attitude.

"I hope it will not be long," said Garcia.

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CALLING a sturdy native servant, he placed him in position to guard her, and closed the sea-shell portières after him.

Many books were on the shelves that lined the walls of this Garcia's den. Their range and number equaled, if not surpassed, the sets in her own library. As opposed to the Spanish translation of Mark Twain's works, there appeared the well-thumbed pages of Tolstoy's strong and candid volumes, while side by side nestled the works of Cooper, Kraft-Ebbing, De Maupassant, Gorky and Kipling. Dickens, Hugo, Balzac and Longfellow were names that came under her roving eye, and then, passing over these well-known names to those of Poe and Goethe—authors she had never read—her fingers came to rest on Fitzgerald's creative translation, "The *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam." She had never read it and, since she must make the best of her temporary imprisonment, the curiosity of this fresh-lived girl led her to make what she could of Omar's age-old truths.

Omar is appreciated best when coming as a sauce to the rice-dish of broadening travels and the opened eyes of years. Perhaps some of it went over her head. And perhaps some of it shocked this girl, who had been raised in the Church. But it was interesting and, because of their apparent vagueness at the initial reading, many of the passages had to be read twice. So the minutes passed faster than their wont. Señor Garcia glanced in once or twice, saw her absorbed, so did not disturb her, and at last, looking up from the book, she saw it was growing late.

"Ten o'clock!" she started to ejaculate. But quickly she placed her fingers to her lips. If Omar had kept her awake, he had indirectly affected the guard in the opposite manner, for, having no doubt been lulled by the regular beat of her absorbed breathing, he had fallen fast asleep.

To remain longer seemed ridiculous to the girl. She remembered now a subconscious noting of the patrol's passing some few minutes hence, which meant they would not return for some time. If she could reach the window undetected, it meant a chance to go home and to sleep before the early Christmas mass.

She laid the book carefully down and rose, looking intently at the sleeper. Silently thanking Señor Garcia for his leaning toward thick rugs, she tiptoed across to the high open window and dropped to the soft ground with scarce a sound. One moment she paused, struggling against a girlish laugh of excitement, and then, seeing no one, she tiptoed off into the narrow road and walked swiftly for town.

AN INSTANT later she heard a muffled outcry at the house. Then footsteps sounded behind her. She started to run, but quickly thought better of it. Whereas she might escape, she might also run into the hands of an American patrol and the ensuing explanation of her flight lead her into disclosures she wished to avoid. She did, however, increase her pace to a walk that was near a run. Just as she reached the intersection of trail and ford-road the footsteps behind her ceased, and simultaneously a big form, tall and military, loomed before her from the front.

"You!" exclaimed the Grenadier.

"Whoever followed me will go straight back and report that I have gone straight to the Grenadier," was her thought. "Oh, I *do* hope Sun Tung gets through to-night!"

Aloud she said,

"Yes, me—or—what is correct in English?"

"Bless me if I remember!" he laughed, stepping to her side as she continued homeward. "Where have you been?"

"At Señor Garcia's."

"I've been at your home twice," he volunteered. "Just made the rounds of the outposts—habit I've got, though I ought to leave it to the officer of the day—and I was going to quarters to dream of Santa Claus. But now——"

Full of his determination of the afternoon, the Grenadier leaned closer to the girl. He had subjected himself to a rigorous cross-examination and decided that there would be no more foolish emotional lapses.

He told himself, this love-wise youth who now faced it for the first time, that he would take any sappy emotions he might feel by the throat and thrust them deep beneath the surface.

He was no boy, he had decided. Her slip of the afternoon had given him confidence. Indeed, it had carried him a hundred steps past the position which he really was in—in a word, placed him, from his own viewpoint, in the position of an accepted lover. He felt very complacent, very sure of his

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position. There was a strain of condescension in his attitude, too. Was he not going to make her his wife—*his* wife, the wife of a future general?

Carmencita guessed at least at his intentions, if not the full extent of his complacent thoughts. She feared yet longed to hear what he had to say. She wanted to run, for her heart was in a panic. Oh, why had she been led by impulse that afternoon? She drew fearsomely away, hoping that he would hold her back, and then, as he was on the point of proposal, she cried out at a half-welcome interruption.

The night behind them was punctured by sharp reports and cries and galloping feet.

CHAPTER XV

THE TURKEYS OF PRIVATE TODD

SAVE for the actual cooking, the preparations for the feast were satisfactorily completed when Todd, taking a merited rest from his labors, looked out into the soft black night and reached for a "square-faced" Chinese bottle concealed under a certain sack. He tipped up the receptacle with satisfaction.

"I've earned this," he sighed. "Some day's work, *believe* me."

"*We* have earned it, you mean," said his bunkie, McLane. "Gimme that bottle."

"That's you—always looking for a share of the reward, when if it hadn't been for my ingenuity——"

"And gall!"

"And gall? No, you insect, not gall. Ingenuity. If it hadn't been for that we would have been contemplating a cakeless dinner."

"Seems to me that the Grenadier, who chipped in ten, and the little lady, who furnished the brains, ought to come in for some reward too."

"H'm," said Todd. "We might go to the Old Man and tell him we swore off drinking, as a sign of appreciation."

"Not by a jugful," grinned McLane. He tipped the bottle up and held it so long that Todd took it away.

"I think she ought to have some reward, too," said Todd. "Now, let—me—see."

He tipped up the bottle for a reflective drink. Then he took another, for inspiration. It came, for Todd held the bottle to the light and allowed himself his monthly grin.

'*Thought* I'd get down to that soon," said he. "First inch—comfort; second—sublime satisfaction; third—tentative stirring of the things that are to be; fourth—reflections on your past life; fifth—inspiration."

"And what's next?"

"Elocution, boxing-gloves, the aurora borealis and other things wide and various. But that's not the point. It's lucky that you didn't get that inch, because your inspirations lead to pure unadulterated devilishness, bah Jove, but I have seen the light whereby we noble warriors and the little lady shall eat turkey until we sprout pin-feathers."

"How you going to get it? Hatch it?"

"Ye gawds, no! Do I look like an incubator? Do you remember that *presidente* saying he wanted ten dollars for those birds?"

"Come on," said the other. "I don't need a brick house to land on me."

"So I perceive," said Todd. "Get the stuff."

They reached for their pistol-belts, machetes and a long canvas bag, then hiked out toward Señor Garcia's *hacienda*. They neared it without mishap, although they almost ran into one of the patrols. When this had passed they stood contemplating the house.

Carmencita was visible through the library window.

"Wonder what she's doing here?" whispered Todd.

"Dunno. Where's them birds is the question."

Todd pointed to the roof, where, barely discernible yet unmistakable in their outlines, five feathered balls huddled on the ridge-pole.

"Well, how in —— are we going to get them?"

"Wait until I reconnoiter."

Todd tiptoed around the house and came back, saying, "Come with me." He led McLane some distance up the corduroy.

"We want two crotched sticks," he said. "We'll just slip back to the new barracks and fix up a couple bamboo-poles with pegs for the job."

"Well what the ——"

"Hide the junk here in the grass," said Todd, hurrying along. "That shack is built like the rest of these places as to roof—see? Loose ridge-pole laid in the crack of the nipa sheaves—shingles you might

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call 'em—to split the rain. Sticks out at both ends. All we got to do is to lift that pole easy and those birds are gone coons."

"You ought to be elected to Congress," exulted McLane.

"Oh, a governorship will do me," Todd replied.

IN FIFTEEN minutes they were back at the *hacienda* with the crotched poles. Inspection proved that no one was in sight save Carmencita in the library. They could not see the guard, for he was farther back in the room. When they stepped close to the building she was out of sight, and as the walls were free of windows directly under the ridge-pole, they figured that no one in the house could see their raised poles except during the instant they stepped free of the house. Todd remained at the north end while McLane went to the south.

As they could neither see each other nor run the risk of calling out, they had agreed to lift together and then walk out to the west of the building, and then, if all went well, to proceed some distance down the corduroy road. They could then stop at the sack and safely unload the birds.

All went well at first. Energetic colored gentlemen can tell you that a sleeping turkey is the easiest of all birds to "nab." Each, feeling the tremor of the other's stick, lifted high and walked to the left, where Todd, being now in the lead, started up the trail.

"Don't walk so fast!" his bunkie whispered sibilantly.

"Shut your darn' mouth!" Todd snorted back. "You'd wake your grandmother in her grave!"

So, while Carmencita delved with Omar, the stars looked down on two grunting warriors who stepped gingerly along the trail with five sleeping turkeys contentedly snoring on the pole above their heads.

"Ain't we ever going to get to that sack?" McLane whispered again. "I can't balance this pole all night."

"If you open your head again that loud I'll *balance* you!" Todd grunted. "Ah—here's the sack."

"How we going to get them down? Just let them fall?"

"Say—Noah would have put you with the animals. Naw! Don't joggle that pole! Now, you take your pole and start to the east—easy—and I go to the west. Then we let down easy—see? Now."

Gently they lowered the pole to the ground. With care they stepped toward the birds. Todd's foot came down on one's neck, and each hand captured another, while McLane grabbed the remaining two.

"Get the sack!" Todd whispered.

"How can I, with these birds in my hands?"

"Aw—ring one of their necks."

"Can't. He'd flop and kick up a noise."

"Hook it over here with your foot, then, and put the birds between your knees after you get it here. There—now we'll make it."

The move was successful, and in a moment they stood up with five birds weighting the sack to its full capacity.

"Gee! Some one's coming from the house!" McLane whispered. "Let's run!"

For answer Todd pulled McLane into the grass.

"And maybe run into the officer of the day, eh? Nix."

"It's only Carmencita," said McLane as she passed. "Let's follow her as soon as she gets on a piece."

They were on the point of doing this when an ejaculation from the house halted them. Other voices joined in. A voice harsh in reprimand sounded above another shaken with fear and then they heard the thump of a man lighting on the sward below the window and the soft pad of his feet running toward them.

"Do you suppose it's us he's after?"

"If it is, he'll get something he don't expect."

But the native went by them.

"Settles that," said Todd. "Better not go that way, for fear we'll run into more natives. Come on."

His bunkie followed him, and, as they pushed through the grass, Todd explained:

"We'll head south until we get opposite that last outpost, because they're all fellows from our troop and we'd have to divvy with the others at the ford. We can cross the river there, go on down to the coconut-grove and come across right at the barracks."

The total weight of five turkeys is no light burden, and the sweat soon poured from McLane in streams, while Todd, who was in the lead, pushed gingerly ahead through the high grass. This occasionally rose to the height of twenty feet in the strip that lay between the paddies and the

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river-bank, and once they almost blundered into the mucky ooze of the rice-paddies. Todd immediately veered to the southwest.

"Where is that outpost, I wonder? It ought to be just about two minutes' walk from that shack."

"Cut in until you get to the——"

McLane meant to say the river-bank but his words were cut short by a sharp *"Qui vive?"*

"Amigos!" whispered Todd, thinking fast. His hand came back and tapped McLane on the arm in a command for quiet. He stepped forward, while McLane, his heart beating a wild tattoo, waited for what seemed centuries.

In reality but a few seconds elapsed before he heard Todd yell, "Well, I'll be ——!"

SIMULTANEOUSLY Todd's pistol exploded in the quiet. Once, twice, the gun echoed again. There was a scream, a groan and another fusillade of answering shots, one of which whipped close to McLane's head.

"Throw up your hands, the lot of you!" yelled Todd at whomever he had encountered.

"What has he run into?" gasped McLane.

In the distance galloping hoofs could be heard, while the grass and brush near by were crashing under the feet of men coming from the outpost.

"Don't shoot, you fellows!" Todd called. "It's Todd! I've got Sun Tung and a whole train of Christmas presents for his friend Segundo!"

"And when the Old Man sees these stolen turkeys he'll give us a Christmas present of thirty days!" groaned McLane.

He had been "in a sweat" trying to decide whether to keep fast hands on the birds or to help Todd, but, having been held back by a fear of shooting his friend in the darkness, and hearing now that he was all right, McLane decided, "Me for the birds," and crept off into the grass.

In the meantime the Grenadier and Carmencita had halted, wondering. Perhaps it was only an *hombre* stealing up on a sentry, he thought at first. The ensuing turmoil banished this possibility. He must investigate at once, and that meant a postponement of his avowal.

"I'll have to go," he said, with reluctance plain in his voice.

She laid a hand on his arm. "Tell me what happened when you come back," she said.

"You mean——"

"Come to the house as soon as you come back. I'll wait for you."

He looked at her, not guessing her perturbation over the knowledge she withheld from him. She had immediately guessed that Sun Tung had been apprehended and, after the Grenadier departed with two men, called hastily from the ford outpost, she whispered, "They'll think I told, they'll think I told!"

"Who got them?" asked the Grenadier when he arrived on the scene. He held up a lantern secured from one of the men and glanced about at the ponies packed with provender. He followed his own question as his eyes fell on the Chinaman. "Sun Tung! Well, by George—this *is* some Christmas present! Who got him?"

"Todd, sir."

"Oh! Todd, what are you doing out here?"

"Sir, I thought I'd slip out here and over the river for a little *tuba* and——"

"Any one with you?"

"Yes, sir. McLane."

Todd had thought of lying, but—where was McLane? Suppose they should find him? So he explained that McLane had been following some distance behind and probably had halted when he heard firing. Maybe he was over the river.

"Perhaps he's hit, too. Beat up the grass about here and see if you can find him, you men," the officer ordered. However, since McLane was already across the river and going toward the quarters with his sack, they did not find him. Todd guessed at his whereabouts and breathed easier.

The Grenadier looked at the two wounded Filipinos on the ground. "Two of you pick up those *hombres*, put them on ponies and take them to the hospital," he ordered. "Jameson, you go to quarters and see if McLane is back. You two, take Sun Tung and put him in the guard-house. The rest of the patrol dismount—take all the provender off those ponies, pile it up and set fire to it right here. Todd, you come with me."

"Did you recognize any of the other *hombres?*" he asked Todd.

"No, sir. Don't know those two I hit. Just knew Sun Tung."

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"Pretty close to Garcia's house," said the Grenadier, thinking aloud.

"Oh, Lord!" Todd thought. "I hope he doesn't go prowling around there if Garcia missed those turkeys. Rats, though; there he goes."

THE light still gleamed in the library when they arrived. The Grenadier was admitted by Garcia himself, urbane, ostensibly curious and immaculate from head to foot.

There were no mud-stains on him, the Grenadier saw that. He had completed a very hasty toilet, a fact which the Grenadier may have guessed at, but of which he had no proofs.

"What was the disturbance?" the Filipino asked.

"Sun Tung caught smuggling," was the blunt answer.

Garcia raised his eyebrows.

"And you caught him?"

"Yes, just as we are going to catch all of them—in time. I thought perhaps some of the bullets might have penetrated your home, and stopped to see."

Garcia assured him that no one had been hit at his home, and pressed an invitation upon the officer to remain a while. He must at least smoke one cigar with him. And he had never had the opportunity to show the Grenadier his library. But, though the cigar was accepted, the invitation was declined upon the plea of urgent business at the guard-house, and the Grenadier rejoined Todd.

"No birds missed as yet," Todd thought. "But what will that chump bunkie of mine tell him? Ah! Here comes Jameson."

"Sir," said the latter, "McLane is at the quarters now. He lost Todd and was across the river, thinking that Todd would join him when the firing started, and was afraid to come over for fear some of his own men might shoot him by mistake."

"Very well," grunted the officer.

"A likely tale," he thought, "but whatever they were up to, I'll let go this time. Getting Sun Tung is the best thing that has happened to us yet."

To Todd he said, as he dismissed him, "You did a good night's work."

"Yes, sir," said Todd, thinking more of the birds than the capture. "I'll have a little Christmas present for the Captain in the morning."

The Grenadier opened his mouth to ask him what it was, but did not. Instead, he said, "All right," and walked away toward Carmencita's home, while Todd ran into the kitchen, saw that the turkeys were safe and pommeled McLane affectionately on the back.

"The brainiest move you ever made!" he exulted. "You'll be a Napoleon yet!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE YOUTH OF A WARRIOR

THE Grenadier walked to Carmencita's residence with a light step. He was elated and more than satisfied with the capture of Sun Tung, for to him it meant the breaking of the supply-smugglers' backbone, and hence a shortening of the time intervening before the possible capture of Segundo. Coupled with this was the satisfaction derived from the contemplation of what he deemed a nearing conquest, for he had cast aside all attempt at analysis of his case, confessed to himself that, no matter what differences of opinion there might be between this girl and himself, he wanted her for his wife. The capturing of Sun Tung had interrupted him, but now he intended saying those words which would effectually break down all remaining bars. And so this king of warriors and babe of lovers stepped into her home with a very confident step indeed.

She met him at the door and led him to a den not unlike what one might have expected to find in a tasteful American home. Spanish touches there were, of course; but the room was as a whole cosmopolitan. Above all, it was homelike and restful. Well read himself, he saw on the shelves what he judged to be the results of Father Jacques's guiding suggestions. As he glanced at the furniture, the portraits and the rugs, it struck him afresh that her taste in these things would create the very atmosphere he had longed for in his own home, and so, losing sight of his errand for the moment, he stood idly fingering one of her books until brought to earth by her voice.

"You like my den?" she asked. "I do, too. We try to get something from life—even here. But tell me—who created the disturbance?"

"Sun Tung," he said. He described the capture briefly.

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So it was as she had feared! Her heart beat fast. The people would attribute it directly to her, she knew. Her emotions, if not her thoughts, showed in her face, and the Captain attributed it to sorrow over the blow to the Cause.

"I am sorry you feel bad," he said. "However," with an exultation he could not suppress, "it is one step nearer the end. One step nearer my goal. And say—when we get Segundo——"

He stopped short, remembering. A momentary and awkward pause ensued.

"Now!" said the girl's heart. "Now he will say it!" She held herself very still.

"I know I should not have mentioned it," he said, "nor would I—had I not known—had I not felt that the occurrence of the afternoon gave me the right to believe that I have not come to care in vain."

AS HE spoke she rose from her chair, with cheeks that paled but eyes that grew suddenly clear. The Grenadier, gripping himself before them, went on. "I know of your reputed engagement to Segundo—" Carmencita's eyelids lowered and raised— "but after today, I do not think I need remember that. All these later years I have thought that some day I *might* meet a woman I should care to make my wife. But it seemed improbable as the years went on. I wanted some one who would go up with me—who would grace my home—who would be a fit guide and an object of reverence for my children—who would be, as well, a companion to me. When I saw you, I'll admit that you appeared alien to all I looked for in my wife, but since then I have been agreeably surprised, and I have come here to night to ask you to be—my wife."

Carmencita looked at him. The delicious fear engendered by this arrival of the expected had left her. Something cold took its place.

"*My* wife—*my* home—*my* children!"

The words chilled her into a state resembling his own forced calmness, and she rose above him, reading him like a book, and seeing him as from the view-point of a mother.

"You have paid me the great compliment," she answered, choosing words carefully. "But before I answer I must point out one or two things. Just now you said you wanted a wife to go up with you—by that do you mean promotion?"

"Why—yes."

"And is that all this war means to you?"

Father Jacques again! The Grenadier flushed, nettled.

"Of course. I have striven for promotion all my life."

"And that's just it," she cried. "It *is* your life—or rather, *you* are your life. The contemplation of your ultimate success has narrowed you and made you—not egotistical—but an egoist. Don't you see?"

He stared hard at her.

"Tell me," she asked. "Have you ever had a hard bump, a setback?"

"I have had bumps, but never setbacks. I beat those down," he said simply.

"That is it! You have been too successful."

Again the Grenadier looked hard at her. He could not understand any one bemoaning a superabundancy of success. He was many miles away from understanding what she was trying to impress on him.

"Perhaps I haven't been quite warm enough in my statements," he said. He came around the table. "I am—not good—at sentiment," he continued. And he blushed furiously.

"Please," she cried, retreating. "I can't—can't——"

He stopped in amazement. "But I have asked you to be my wife!" he faltered.

"Did you think that was all that was necessary?" she cried.

He gulped. The amazing fact that she had actually refused him seemed beyond his immediate comprehension. When he realized it fully a dull flush of anger brutalized his features.

"You need a bump, a hard bump," she hurried on, "before you can see—what I mean."

Suddenly he reached out and took her by the arms.

"You'll marry me! You've *got* to marry me!" he gritted.

She looked up at him quite calmly now.

"This is not an age where women can be chased with a club," she said quietly. "And I don't think they *ever* liked it. I know I don't. Please release me."

He did so with a hopeless sag of the shoulders. That, however, endured but an instant. His pride had been cruelly stung,

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and he straightened like a man, but with an anger like that of a callow youth.

"After this afternoon," he said pettishly, cuttingly, "I think I was justified in assuming that you would at least be favorable to my attentions. I have overestimated your sincerity of character. Segundo may——"

She became in a flash the impetuous girl.

"I *hate* you now," she cried. "I hate you, I hate you! Please leave me!"

He bowed very stiffly and went out the door. He lit a cigar and stalked home in a cloud of wrath and short volcanic puffs of smoke.

JIMMY KNOX greeted him effusively as he entered.

"Bully work to-night, eh? You've got them on the hip now!"

Jimmy received a hard jolt here.

"Look here, Mr. Knox," said his superior, "after this when I come in don't you forget to salute your superior officer!"

"Oh—*all right!* I beg your pardon, Captain. But I think I'll just move my effects—if I have your permission, sir?"

The Grenadier relaxed, and with an apologetic oath reached out for the youth and pushed him down to the edge of the cot. Before they went to sleep Jimmy had gained more than an inkling of the situation. He studied a little, looking sidewise at his friend.

"I can see the point," he thought. "There's *stuff* in that girl."

He patted his friend on the back and said, sagely, "Cheer up. It'll all pan out O. K. Let's sleep on it, anyway."

CHAPTER XVII

THE BOLO

AFTER early mass the next morning, the Captain met Garcia on the street.

"I made some one an involuntary present of my five turkeys last night," said the latter.

"Todd!" was the officer's thought.

Aloud he said, "Turkeys? I hadn't—oh, do you mean you would like to have me investigate?"

"I thought perhaps some of the men——"

"Might have stolen them?"

"It is possible."

The Grenadier looked down at the ground and rolled his cigar around in his mouth. Then he looked up quickly.

"By George," he said, "it *is* possible. They may have taken them from that pile of provender caught with Sun Tung."

Garcia drew back, startled. He forced a look of pained surprise. "You mean——"

"Perhaps Sun Tung's men stole them first."

"Ah!"

"But I'll investigate, nevertheless."

"On second thought," said Garcia, "it is a trivial matter. I would not thus impugn the honesty of the American soldiers. Let us drop the matter."

The officer moved off, chuckling. And when Todd, with a droop to his eye and the blankness of the ages in his face, presented him with a "peacock caught some days before and kept as a surprise for the Commanding Officer," the latter thanked him kindly and without so much as the flicker of an eyelash. Carmencita, too, ate "peacock" that day, browned to a queen's taste, and if, as Todd muttered to himself, "the heart of love went starving, the stomach was at least admirably provided for!" Todd had eyes of his own.

Shortly after he broke fast, Father Jacques called on the Grenadier. He looked troubled.

"I have something distasteful to impart," he said. "In a nutshell—well, it is this. I have learned that certain people think that Carmencita knew of the intended smuggling last evening and informed you."

"She did not."

"They think so. Her life is in danger."

Striking a match, the Captain looked thoughtfully at it until it burned nearly to his fingers.

"Thank you, Father," he said at last, looking up. "I'll have a sentry placed at her house to-night."

Father Jacques thanked him in turn, and called on Carmencita to inform her of the intended guard. He found her in her den, reading.

"I did *not* tell him," she cried, passionately. "But I suppose the Tagalogs will never believe it. A sentry about my home! That will only strengthen their belief. They will think I asked for it."

"We can't help that now, child."

"And I hate him!"

"Of course."

She looked down, blushing.

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"Well—I do. But," with a sigh, "I suppose the sentry will be necessary."

"Yes, I am sure that is best."

She sat brooding over it after he had gone. Things had assuredly worked themselves to a peculiar pass, she reflected. She wondered curiously what Segundo had said in his letter, and when Garcia would put in an appearance with it.

The question was answered by Garcia himself.

He looked about, saw that no one was within hearing and handed her the letter. Nodding her gratitude, she held it unopened and awaited his pleasure.

His eyes were decidedly hostile.

"I wish to congratulate the señorita on her escape—and the result of her interest in the *americanos*," he said.

"Meaning?"

"What else could I mean?"

"It is useless to deny it," she said with a weary shrug, "or ask why, if I warned them, I did not mention the prominent gentlemen connected with the affair—among them yourself?"

"We do the señorita the honor to think that she is averse to causing any more deaths than occurred under the circumstances."

"Well, now that you have decided that I am guilty, what will be done?"

"What will be done? Were it not for Segundo's positive orders, your life would not go beyond the sunset. Do you not realize that you have almost whipped us in this locality? Save for a few plantations, among them my own, Sun Tung owns nearly all the ranches near-by, and where do you suppose we will be, with those idle? Even now I am having a hard time suppressing some of the rabble, who wish to disregard Segundo's orders and kill you at once—yes, to-night."

"They need not listen to Segundo," she flashed. "I have nothing in common with him personally."

"Nor with us," retorted Garcia. "But he does not believe that you have nothing in common with him. Perhaps he will, when he gets the word sent him!"

"And that was——"

"Concerning your attitude."

"It is of my own choosing. And this, I am sorry to point out, is my home!"

She held the door open suggestively.

Garcia's face darkened.

"You tempt me to disregard Segundo's orders on my own account," he rasped. "Here, perhaps," and he produced a paper, "is a document that will keep us in the running in spite of your act. We shall see."

He left her without disclosing what it was.

WEARIED, the girl sat down. Segundo's letter proved to be a closely written epistle, full of ardent declarations, through which ran a current of jealousy. It ended with a confident statement that, no matter if her soft heart could not condone some of the necessary acts of war, and no matter if circumstances held her away from him just now, he would be in a position to reverse his fortunes soon, and at that time he promised to lay such siege to her heart as would force her capitulation. He stated further that on Friday night he expected to get through the American lines and to Señor Garcia's home. He asked if she would meet him there at that time.

How bold he was, and confident, she thought. Confident! Just like the man she had repulsed last eve. She tapped her knee with the paper, silently, musingly, thinking rather of the Grenadier than of the writer. Absorbed thus, she did not hear any approaching steps nor guess at an intrusion until, looking up, she saw a *beno*-crazed Filipino standing in the very door through which the subject of her thoughts had departed. In his hand was a short machete.

THE Grenadier, in the meantime, had called Jimmy to his side.

"Jimmy," said he, "we'll have to go to the guard-house and have a talk with Sun Tung."

"*Via* the water-route?"

"If necessary."

"We might get something out of those wounded *hombres*."

"That is going too far. They're hurt. I'll make the Chinaman talk. I'll not bother Carmencita. Orderly, go after Señor Valero."

The orderly returned, saying that Valero could not be found.

"Then—— No, wait. I'll go myself," said the Captain.

He passed out and down the river *calle*, and so temporarily missed Garcia, who with his document was coming up the main street. Thus it happened that the Grenadier drew close to Carmencita's house as

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the Filipino threatened her from the door.

"What do you want?" she was asking in Tagalog. She strove to appear calm, though fear tugged and pulled at her nerves until she wanted to scream, to run, to jump through the window—anything to escape that murderous knife.

"Your life," he growled.

"But why?"

"Why? Have you not ruined us here? And been a traitor all through? Bah! It shows in your eyes."

She feared to leave his eyes for a second. The fact that he wavered told her he was lashing on his courage to the point of actual murder, and that if she held his gaze she might avert this for a time. Once she looked away her position was hopeless. It was useless to look away, in any case.

There were no weapons in the room, and she, seated at the end of the table, was farther from the big window than her enemy, who could easily cut her down before she reached it. The window faced to the west and the river *calle*.

Perhaps accident, perhaps his memories, caused the officer to look up from the street at this crisis. He looked, and saw through the window the Tagalog in the library door, and in the same flash the leering face, the grim machete, the eloquent meaning of his position.

He dragged at his pistol with the sickening thought that he would be too late.

"But you have no proof!" the girl was chattering, clutching desperately at each second of delay.

THE Tagalog snarled. He took a step forward.

The Captain's finger crooked and the heavy Colt disrupted the quiet of the street. The Tagalog staggered. The machete dropped from his paralyzed fingers, while the girl, who had been keyed high in her deadly peril, jumped as though touched with a live wire.

Her nerves thrummed and twanged horribly, like violin-strings pulsating after an angry blow. She saw that the native had been struck diagonally across the right breast and right arm.

He cursed, and stooped for the machete, and then her dire necessity cut the chains of terror about her limbs and she leaped for the window and out to the ground.

She landed almost in the Grenadier's arms.

"Are you hurt?" he cried.

Before she could answer he flung her roughly aside so that she fell sprawling some distance away. At the same instant he leaped back, for above him the native had appeared in the window and thrown the bolo with his left hand.

If awkward, it was an energetic heave.

The machete bounded sharply against the officer's boot. In the same breath the Tagalog leaped. The thud of the bolo, the landing of the native and the report of the officer's revolver came almost as one, like heart-beats following heart-beats.

The native screamed, lashed out with his left arm, staggered, then reeled from the impact of a third shot in the jaw and fell heavily, his muscles twitching in the final spasms like a man in the electric chair.

Down the street the guard came pounding. The Grenadier ran to Carmencita and helped her to her feet.

"Are you hurt? Thank God, no. I *had* to throw you that way."

"No, no, thank you," she exclaimed.

She brushed an expostulating hand across her eyes.

"I think—I think I need—a drink of water," she faltered.

"Right. Sergeant, have a detail take that fellow and bury him at once. And sergeant," the Grenadier's jaws snapped, "have a detail sent out at once and round up every person in this town and assemble them on the parade. Now, let me help you to the house, señorita."

In the library the girl collected herself and told him the reasons for the attack.

"Yes. I know. Father Jacques told me. If I knew who all the ring-leaders were—well, I'll find out some time. Perhaps right away. I was on my way down here to ask your presence at the guard-house, as an interpreter, but now I'll get some one else."

"You were going to——"

"Interview Sun Tung."

"But this is Christmas."

"I *have* to get at the bottom of this."

"Well, I'd rather not——"

"I won't ask you to, after this. And now, I'm glad you weren't hurt, and hope you will suffer no ill effects."

Again he bowed rather stiffly—almost as stiffly as on the evening previous, she thought afterward—and left. Both seemed

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to have forgotten their talk, though the memory lay not far below the surface. It at least made the officer excessively polite. He had gone some distance before she remembered that she had not thanked him for his act, and then it was too late.

ARRIVING at the parade, the Commander found some of the people already assembled. Nor did the rest come tardily. In front of the headquarters-building Garcia accosted him.

"We are to have another mass-meeting?" he inquired with a smile.

"Right away."

"Pardon me, but I have a little paper I should like the Captain to see. This morning I saw patrols were in charge of Sun Tung's *portreros*—so, knowing the *comandante's* fairness, I wished him to see this paper before he took steps to injure the property."

The Grenadier glanced up from the document. "Can't read this. It's in Spanish."

"Pardon—I forgot. It is a bill of sale for Sun Tung's holdings made out to me, Captain."

"You bought his property?"

"*Sí*," said the old fellow with a quick wink. "Sun Tung is afraid maybe he will never be allowed to come back to Iligan again, and I drove a very good bargain with him."

Short hard puffs of the cigar intervened before the officer answered. Then he returned the paper and nodded at Garcia to follow him. On their way to the guard-house the orderly reported that Señor Valero had returned.

"Good. Tell him to come to me at once. Señor Garcia, will you be kind enough to wait here a moment? Good."

Valero, the Grenadier, three members of the guard and Sun Tung repaired to a position behind the fort and out of sight of the crowd.

"Ask Sun Tung if he made any disposition of his property," the officer directed.

"He says Señor Garcia have all the property," was the reply.

"Now ask him who were the other men in this town connected with the smuggling."

Sun Tung shook his head.

"He is a liar," the Captain grunted. "Men, wade him out into the water."

Three times and the fourth was Sun Tung immersed; the men were on the point of putting him under the fifth time when the officer held up his hand.

"A man standing that without breaking down is either telling the truth or is a rascal of admirable stamina," he exclaimed. "I am inclined to believe the latter. Take him back to the guard-house. Valero, come with me."

Upon the slight rise before the guard-house the officer for the second time faced a sea of brown and curious faces, all more or less sullen.

"Tell them," he said to Valero, "that Sun Tung has refused to reveal any of the names of the men I feel certain were implicated in this affair. However, I want to point out this—that the act of this afternoon, when one of the rabble tried to assassinate Señorita Carmencita because he believed she was guilty of revealing the intended sortie to me, is, in my opinion, an expression of the popular belief and sympathy in this town, and that in spite of the fact that all of you have taken the oath of American allegiance and have since been treated more in accordance with the standards of fairness than any other country in the world would have treated you in like circumstances, you are all at heart in sympathy with Segundo's cause and will make every effort behind our backs to aid him in that cause. So the time for laying aside the sham of pretended friendship has come.

"Señorita Carmencita did *not* warn me. Mark that. The credit belongs to one of my men. And the next man caught intimidating her at any time will swing as high as Haman.

"And now, Señor Garcia, about tha' document. You'll have to consider it nul' and void. By this act Sun Tung has forfeited all his property. Your money, if you have already paid him, will be returned to you. If you have any trouble getting it, come to me.

"Señor Valero, tell these people that, in order to help toward putting down this insurrection, I'm going to destroy every vestige of Sun Tung's property.

"Lieutenant Knox, see that a detail goes out at once to Sun Tung's ranches. Burn everything but hemp, and shoot every animal on the place.

"There'll be enough on the smaller ranches to feed these people until this insurrection is put down and, until it is, the products of those farms will be brought

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into Sun Tung's store, where an American soldier will be stationed to dole out the rations fairly. Each Tagalog and Visayan shall receive one ration, and no more. Filipino prisoners and Moros will work the small farms, and any Filipino caught trying to get food in any other way will be confined. Thus if you smuggle supplies to Segundo you'll have to starve yourselves. Dismiss the crowd."

The astounded and muttering gathering walked dazedly away. Assuredly, with this *americano diablo* in control, the end was drawing near.

CHAPTER XVIII

"HE SHOULD BE KILLED"

"HE SHOULD be killed!" was the consensus of opinion among the Filipinos. "He should be killed for the good of the Cause."

This, while not coming to Carmencita directly, made itself felt during the next two days, for the natives stopped speaking as she approached each group, and their glances were redolent with hate. The gloom of an impending climax was in the air. They had been rebuffed at every turn and the bitterness of it galled them to a sullen frenzy. She was nervous with misgivings and curiosity as to their intention and tried at every opportunity to overhear their conversations.

For the girl had ceased fighting with her heart over the Grenadier. The youth she had seen revealed through the portal of his transfiguring smile had taken her unwilling heart in two warm hands and held on through the storm of repulsion his egoism and the rough outer man of him had caused. Indeed, when she had risen to the altitude of a mother above him during his egotistical and insufferable proposal, she had looked with love's eyes through the dross to the gold beneath. She must bring this gold to the surface, for his sake and her own.

"It is there, I *know*, it is there," she finally declared. "He is blind with the thought of self, self, self!"

And the Cause? Love, coupled with the shaping of the Filipinos' attitude, had dulled her ardor for it. She did not deny longer that she would do anything to shield the Grenadier from harm were it possible to do so. A traitor? Yes, if needs be. She was not affiliated with the Filipinos through ties of blood, after all. Many of her Spanish countrymen had immediately sided with the Americans. The fact that the Americans had destroyed her ranch, coupled with her long and friendly associations with the educated Filipinos, and the firm belief that they were right, had led her to declare for the latter's side in their fight for liberty. But what if they were right? It did not condone a murderer's methods. If they killed in fair fight, well and good. But if they attempted any back-stabbing toward the Grenadier in person, and she found it out, she would attempt to frustrate it even if her move wrecked the whole Filipino cause.

FOR a time she was unsuccessful in trying to overhear conversations. Even her own servants maintained a discreet silence while about her. But on Friday morning, coming down the stairs in soft soundless slippers, she overheard voices in the kitchen, and, catching Segundo's name, she held her breath and tiptoed near the door.

"Segundo will be in to-night," her tirewoman was saying. "To-morrow we will have the grand word!"

"Yes, and then we shall see what happens to dogs!" a *muchacho* echoed.

Carmencita shrank back. To-night! She remembered Segundo's message asking her to meet him at Garcia's. It was *then* the next move was to be decided upon! She slipped back, went softly up the stairs and then came down quite noisily. The chattering ceased in the kitchen.

Shortly after breakfast Señor Garcia entered.

"Is the señorita coming to the house this evening?" he asked.

"No. I have decided not to. I have nothing in common with the Cause, you have decided, so I will not see Señor Segundo."

"He has been indiscreet enough to announce his coming to you. However," leaning close, "if you reveal *that* to the Americans, I shall take it on myself to avenge the Cause!"

"Oh, please leave! I am weary to death of threats and intrigue. You have my word. I shall not tell of his coming."

That day she was busy with Lieutenant

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Grimes and did not see the Grenadier except in an official capacity. She ate a lonely meal in the evening and afterward strummed for a few minutes on her great harp. But shortly she laid this aside and stepped into her study.

A grave peril hovered over the Americans —and the Grenadier—she knew. She was sure it would not come as a blow in the open, but as one in the dark, and that, if she were to get any inkling of it, her best chance would be at the meeting that night.

However, she could not attend that openly. Segundo, she reasoned, would not allow her to attend the meeting proper, his request having been based on personal motives alone, whereas the others would assuredly advance serious objections and seek to have her confined until the working out of the project, whatever that happened to be. Nor could she contemplate meeting Segundo with any degree of assurance when she remembered that Garcia had sent him word of her supposed leaning toward the Grenadier. In his jealousy, she felt sure that Segundo could be a demon who would go to any lengths, even to enforcing her departure with him into the hills. Therefore she must go stealthily if at all, though she knew she was running great risks for no material gain to herself.

"Ah, no, no, I won't say that," she cried, candidly face to face with herself. "What I gain—is here!" She looked out into the night toward headquarters, her face glorified. "*My* wife! *My* home! Oh, what do you know about love, you great, cock-sure giant of a boy? Boy, boy, *boy!*" She whispered the last with a little cry like that of a Russian mother. "I hate you, and I love you, and I could spank you—but I'll go!"

Out in the darkness the lizards and the crickets joined hands with the monotonous lap of the surf on the far-out reef, and to this music the girl listened as she stood at the door waiting for the sentry's steps to die out around the building. Twice she peered over her shoulder to see if the servants had awakened. But no sound came. In a moment she was out and tripping through the darkness to the south. She breathed in relief as she slipped past the church and across the ford road without being halted.

But this was not half the adventure. Suppose the Filipinos had a sentry out? It was more than likely that one would be stationed on the corduroy road to warn them of a patrol's approach. Deciding this to be the case, she turned into the cogon-grass for a detour.

It was disagreeable going in the grass. Whereas the grass alone was as yet comparatively free from dew, the roots were moist in the sodden ground. She was muddy and bedraggled when, after a long half-hour, she arrived near the house.

NO LIGHTS appeared save in the the library. That apparently was empty. Perhaps they were in one of the back rooms, she thought, so she cast an apprehensive glance around for the expected sentry, saw no one and crept gingerly forward. Occasionally she stopped, trembling. She fancied she could hear her own heart.

Then, reassured by the thought that, since she could not see the sentry, he could not see her either, and furthermore must be some distance up the road in order to have ample time for a warning, she went forward more boldly until she arrived in a position on the east side of the house.

Still she heard nothing. But after a bit she saw, a short distance to the east, a ray of light which flickered, went low, raised again, then went out altogether.

"The stables!" she thought. She started toward them. It was but a few steps, yet it seemed a long-drawn age before she accomplished the passage, while her heart almost failed her when she thought of the possibility of cracking a stick underfoot. But this was precluded by the spongy ground on which she stepped. Those she encountered sank in. She reached the stable without mishap and, creeping to the side away from the light in the house, she laid her ear to the wall and listened eagerly.

It was as she expected. She recognized a number of voices, among them Valero's, Garcia's, and those of the latter's clerk and several other prominent Tagalogs. The hum of their voices showed that they were standing about in little groups, evidently discussing matters. She could not distinguish the words clearly for a space of ten minutes. Then a silence ensued, and she heard the well-known voice of Segundo.

She could hear him plainly.

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"GENTLEMEN," he said in Spanish, "there is no longer need for any discussion or hesitancy. The time has come for action that, no matter how deplorable it may appear from the standpoint of the Church, is justifiable in the face of our extremity. The factor that is of the most consequence at this time is the American commander, and he, since he has beat us at every turn, must be removed. In capturing Sun Tung and forcing each citizen to draw but one man's rations he has struck us the keenest blow of all, and unless we remove him and his garrison now, our chances of ultimate success are exceedingly doubtful.

"He must be removed for the very efficiency which, albeit we deplore it, must be admitted. Without him the Americans will be children. With my men waiting at the appointed hour, and the entire population coöperating, we shall wipe the curse of American oppression from our vicinity. What matters it if the church"—Carmencita thrilled—"be used as the place for the initial move? He and a bare half-dozen are the only Americans who attend services. At the appointed signal the people rise and the thing is done; and then, before the unsuspecting Americans get to the gun-racks, you fall upon them and I with my men will rush in to help you.

"Señor Garcia, I fully appreciate your natural compunction and aversion to the prospect of using the church, but my own soul, steeped in the Cause, rises above those compunctions, and rejoices in the thought that next Sunday morning we shall stand victors by an act which, though it may temporarily desecrate the church, shall by its very success wipe out consideration of that stain and place us once more where we belong—free of the oppressor, a free people in a land intended for the free!"

By the passionate timbre of his voice Carmencita could visualize his features as he leaned toward these men and swayed them with the intensity of his ringing words. She could see the black eyes burning, the sallow cheeks glow red, the passionate sweep of his arm.

She could guess, too, at the growing fire in his emotional listeners. And when he finished they fully verified her expectations. They forgot their position and started a cheer which, though immediately choked by Garcia and Segundo, threw the girl into a panic.

"Fools!" cried Segundo. "The patrol might hear! Señor Valero, step to the door and——"

Carmencita did not wait to hear more. She fled as noiselessly as possible into the mangroves and cogon-grass skirting the rice-paddies to the east, and after a space turned northward. It took an hour of slough-wading, grass-parting and occasional breathless halts to manage the short distance to town, but finally she made it and started the walk to Father Jacques's home.

But here, though free of the bosque, another danger asserted itself. Some cowardly *hombre*, taking advantage of the darkness, might stab her, leaping from the darkness between the houses.

She walked, therefore, in the middle of the street. She was ready for instant flight at the slightest sound, and when she reached the father's home she ran the last few steps with an uncontrollable sob.

THE surprised priest soothed her into a semblance of quiet. Then the story poured from her.

He listened in growing horror. He did not seem to comprehend fully. After all the years of labor toward instilling the beautiful lessons of the mass in the breasts of these, his children, he found them plotting, not only to refute every lesson, in a premeditated, cowardly, murderous act, but to commit that act in the very place where God had vouchsafed his presence in the Host before them. His hands shook. He walked up and down, ringing them like an agitated woman.

"Child, child!" he cried. "Do you mean to say they intend using the *church*?"

"Yes, yes."

"It is heinous! Impossible! To murder him as he bows his head in prayer! To desecrate the spirit of the holy mass! Child, have you told him?"

"No, father."

"Then——"

"Oh, I can't! That is why I came to you."

"But——"

"I can't. Oh—don't you see? It would seem—it would seem, after the other night, like a confession to him personally. I——"

"There, there, I see." Father Jacques continued pacing up and down in great agitation. "Child, you ran great risks, great risks. It seems that——"

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"But will you tell him?" she broke in.

"*Dominus tecum, et cum spiritu meo,*" muttered Father Jacques, with many shakes of the head. "Yes, I shall tell him."

"Oh, will you, will you?"

"Yes."

He looked at her and found heart for a kind smile, though he was heavy with the news.

"You have been a brave girl. Let me take you home now and to a much needed rest."

"Rest! Are you going at once, Father?"

"Yes, child."

"But some one might see you and guess —and then—oh, Father, they might harm even you!"

"It seems best that he should know at once."

"No, no. Wait. The people will attach no suspicion to your visiting him in the morning, and it will do as well then as now. If you were hurt, I would never forgive myself.'

"Well," parried the priest, "at least I must take you home."

They started, and at the house the sentry halted them with a gruff, "I should report you to the Commanding Officer, miss. He wished you kept in for your safety."

"What would he say if he knew I had escaped you?" she countered.

And this view of the matter quieted him.

"Until morning, Father?" she said meaningly.

"Probably it will be best to wait," he said. "Good night, daughter."

"Good night," she answered. With beating heart she went in and up to bed, with many a nervous glance at the servants' quarters for fear of their awakening. She reached her room undiscovered, and crept into bed to a troubled sleep.

But Father Jacques could not thus compose himself. He paced up and down his study with bowed head.

All his life, all his heart-beats he had given these people, at a cost no one knew but himself. Save for a few, these people were far below him intellectually, and for an educated man to deprive himself of the exchange of ideas with people of equal caliber is in itself a sacrifice realized fully only by the comparative few that have tried it.

Yet he would have deemed the sacrifice well worth while had he been sure that the few great truths he had sought to sow had taken fruitful root.

And now his teachings seemed to have gone for naught. Even the talented Garcia had connived at the sacrilege. It filled him with a touch of bitterness hard to dispel.

"I *must* tell the Captain," he muttered. "If I give him more time to consider, he may prick this bubble without the loss of a drop of blood. He need only stay away and hold his troops in readiness and they will see that the plan has fallen through. At any rate, I can not wait until the thing is revealed to him."

SO THE priest set out in the darkness along the main *calle* to the alley leading past the gun-shed, and down this passed to the rear of the headquarters building. Realizing that—to lend color to any possible explanation he might have to give any of his congregation—he must not skulk, he walked forward fearlessly, albeit as quietly as possible, and arrived without being stopped. He awoke the nodding orderly with a touch on the shoulder.

"The *comandante?*" said that worthy. "He's asleep, Father."

"It is a serious matter, son."

"I'll call him, then."

A few moments later the Grenadier appeared.

"Father!" he ejaculated when he saw the priest's ill-controlled features. "Is there anything wrong?"

He reached for a match.

"A great deal. Please do not strike that match. It is better told in the dark, this tale."

Father Jacques began, pacing up and down, while the Captain, now eager for his news, held in and waited, slowly crushing a cigar in his hand the while.

"I have had bad news," the priest said finally. "I have reason to know that they are plotting to massacre you."

The officer started, whistling low.

"Who?" he asked.

"The people here," said the perturbed and reluctant father, his eyes on the floor.

"But just who among them?"

"I can not tell you that," said the priest, much troubled. "I can not condone the act, but I can not bring myself to reveal the names, either. They are but misguided, and carried away by their ardor for the Cause."

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It was now the Grenadier's turn to become serious. He clapped the cigar into his mouth and began clamping it like a bit as he paced back and forth. But it was not like the nervousness of the holy man, who seemed to be under a terrific mental strain. With him it was the nervousness of impending action, and the fact that he was just beginning to see a great light.

"But Father," he said suddenly, "how am I to prevent this if I——"

"By merely staying away. You are to be killed at the services to-morrow morning!"

The priest whispered the last with horror stilling the voice in his throat.

"At the *church*, Father?"

"Yes. And Segundo is to wait outside the town with his men ready for the word, when he will rush in and join the people in an attack on your men," the excited priest rushed on.

The Grenadier gave vent to a harsh ejaculation.

He leaned closer to the father, and in the dim light the latter saw the youth's face transfigured by a fleeting spasm of savage exultation.

"Say that again, Father. Segundo, you say, is to be outside this town?"

Father Jacques grew alarmed.

"You will stay away, will you not?" he cried.

For answer the officer clenched his fist and struck his palm a resounding blow. His eyes gleamed hotly in fierce gladness.

But he controlled himself and turned back to the priest. He saw the light now. A great plan had already crystallized in his brain. He knew instantly that the priest would object seriously should he learn it, knew instantly that it was the best move possible to catch Segundo, knew instantly that he must take advantage of the father's extreme agitation and gain his promise of neutrality until the plan had been carried out.

For he knew that Father Jacques would assuredly bargain for the safety of his misguided children.

"Father, you must leave this to me," he said. "Promise me you will go on with your service as though nothing was about to happen."

For the moment the priest was domineered by the youth's personality.

"I promise," he said before thinking.

"Good, *good!*" cried the Captain in delight. "I'll stop this insurrection now!"

"But what will you do?" Father Jacques queried sharply.

The Grenadier took the old man by the arms and stood looking down at him with a kind smile. He said: "You have promised, father. Leave it to me."

"But if there is bloodshed—son, son, you must not take advantage of my warning and kill these children!"

"If there is any killing, they will bring it on themselves," said the Captain.

"Son, you have tricked me into a promise when I was not myself," the holy man reproached the youth. "Tell me, I implore you, what you intend doing. Will you kill them all? Oh, no, no, you would not do that! Their blood would be on my head!"

"Father," said the Captain, still holding his old friend by the arms, "you *know* I will not take unnecessary advantage of your information. If there is any killing, they will bring it on themselves. I shall not start it. Leave it to me."

NOR could the priest move him further. He went home, partially relieved, yet worried over the outcome, while the Grenadier went up the stairs and awakened Jimmy from a deep sleep. He told that sleepy individual enough to bring him wide-awake, then related his plan.

"But," Jimmy expostulated, "even if you have sentries back of the pipe-organ——"

"Tut, tut!"

"No, I won't 'tut, tut'! What's to prevent them getting *you* even if they, your own men, get a thousand of them afterward?"

"Tut, tut," said the Grenadier again. "I'm going to carry out the plan to the letter."

And the plan was this: He meant to have the majority of his men hanging around the quarters, ostensibly lolling about as though taking advantage of their holiday, while he went to mass with the intention of exposing himself to the danger of death, in order that he might catch the conspirators red-handed in their act.

As Jimmy had pointed out, placing men behind the pipe-organ on Saturday night could not save him personally unless they fired into the people without waiting for a move on their part. It takes but a second

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to take off a man's head! But the Grenadier silenced him with a wave of his hand.

It was the only way to get Segundo—he was going to do it his way.

CHAPTER XIX

MASS PERILOUS

IT WAS a clear dawn—that Sunday of peril. Outside the church, doves cooed in the alcoves, the palms nodded as though in a benediction of peace and all tropical Nature seemed to have joined silent Sabbath hands. But Father Jacques reflected that sunshine, symbolic always of peace and good-will, seemed a mockery. Clouds and rain would have made better company for the thought in his mind.

His first shock had come when, having repaired to the little room back of the altar, he had discovered the shadowy forms of the armed soldiers high up on ladders back of the pipe-organ. They were thus concealed from the congregation, and in a position to thrust their rifles through the apertures in the pipes and riddle the nave with bullets at the first sign of trouble. Evidently they had gained secret admission during the night.

For the first time he gained an inkling of the Grenadier's plan; he saw further light when the officer came in, genuflected, made the sign of the Cross and seated himself in his accustomed place. And Carmencita, who too had had no warning, came in soon after, taking her place on the women's side.

She saw the Grenadier and almost cried out in the midst of her genuflection; she guessed part of his intentions and her face went dead white.

Father Jacques fancied he could see her lips form the words, "Oh, brave, brave!"

Silently the congregation gathered. Here and there a woman looked pale and distrait. For the most part the men were grimly pious, their faces stamped with that sinister religious zeal which condones acts directly antagonistic to that religion's teachings.

Father Jacques eyed their clothing sharply for signs of weapons, but, though he was partially relieved to find no suspicious projections, he knew that a flat-bladed machete is easily concealed beneath a roomy white jacket, and he moved forward for the commencement of the mass, feeling sure that this service, consecrated to the life of the Prince of Peace, would end in a carnival of heinous death.

He could scarce muster spirit to whisper with the Saviour, "Forgive them; for they know not what they do!"

The singing-boys, the ceremonium, the deacon and the subdeacon then took their places, and the mass began.

Here and there a woman snuffled as Father Jacques came to the foot of the altar. Then came a distinct hush.

He bowed down before it, signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and said, "*In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*"

Then, joining his hands before his breast, he began the antiphon.

"*Introibo ad altarem Dei.*"

Would they respond to that, or would they act while his back was turned? Custom held sway.

"*Ad Deum, qui laetificat juventutem meam,*" was the response.

"*Judica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta,*" he said.

The response came again, and the next and the next. If he trembled beneath his robes, he may be forgiven—at any moment the nave might echo and reëcho with the thunder of crashing guns. But the last response came evenly and without a stir in the nave, and he bowed for the Confession.

When he reached the words, "*Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa,*" a woman sobbed low in the rear.

Father Jacques's heart lost a beat. The air was tremulous for a second with electrical impendency. But the sob proved the only sound, and he went on until, their response ended, he gave the Absolution.

Coming to the "*Dominus Vobiscum,*" he said it with an added fervor—he indeed hoped God was with them still—and was relieved at their "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*"

This brought him to the portion of the mass where he extended his hands, joined them and ascended to the altar.

It gave him his first chance to face them. He gave them all a fleeting glance. Eyes left his hurriedly—only the Grenadier looked impassive.

"Oh, brave, oh, brave!" he echoed Carmencita silently.

But when, when would it come? When he bowed over the altar? He suppressed a shudder; he must go on. So, with his nerves threatening to dance ungovernably,

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he bowed and began the *"Oremus Te Domine."*

Still nothing happened. He made the sign of the Cross at conclusion with trembling hand; went through the *Introit* with very dry lips. Through the *Kyrie Eleison*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the kissing of the altar and the acolyte's "Amen," his heart beat under a high tension. Momentarily it expected to stop in horror at the great sacrilege.

He found himself curiously entertaining a secret hope that if it was to be, it would happen *now*, for he could hardly bear this pressure longer. But a second glance at the Grenadier steeled him. If *he* could be calm, then surely the priest must be. So he launched into the epistle of the day and, gaining strength as he went on, neared the end of the service.

They still sat there, mute before the glory of the altar. The light straining through the stained Gothic windows added to the medieval intensity of their brown faces. The Grenadier remained motionless in his place. Could it be that they had postponed the massacre? was the priest's thought. He was afraid to believe so—afraid to think—yet as they rose and the voluminous tones of the well-trained choir reëchoed through the high-ribbed nave, he was ready to give thanks.

BUT suddenly a fear assailed Father Jacques. It chilled him to the core. Perhaps they had but waited until the end of the mass! He looked at Señor Garcia and saw no sign—sought Carmencita's face and looked quickly away—yet could read nothing in other faces of what she plainly feared.

Still, the father's legs trembled at his knee, and sweat, cold as ice, trickled slowly and clammily down his spine. They rose—they were on the point of leaving—still it was quiet, quiet as death.

No sound stirred in the nave, it seemed, save his own restricted breathing.

And then they started silently to leave. And as they did so a woman—the one who had sobbed before—sobbed out anew, *"Mea culpa, mea culpa—Christe eleison, oh, Christe eleison!"*

It was true! They were passing out without attempting the massacre! The tension fell from Father Jacques, and in its place came a great warmth of thanksgiving and prayer. His face beamed and his eyes flooded with tears.

"Deo gratias!" he thundered above the hush.

"Deo gratias!" whispered Carmencita.

Above them a dove cooed softly in the alcove.

CHAPTER XX

"COMMENCE FIRING!"

THROUGH that mass the Grenadier had genuflected, signed himself and murmured the responses subconsciously rather than in the usual spirit. Outwardly calm, he had been constantly on the alert, expecting each moment to be set upon by those men close about him. To carry out his part to the letter, he had not attempted to hide a weapon under his tight blouse. Although he would have received immediate aid from his men behind the organ, his only chance for retaliation would have lain in the opportunity to wrest a bolo from the hands of some native. Sweat stood out on him also when he emerged into the sunlight.

A gray-faced Jimmy met him outside the door.

"Thank God!" he whispered, serious for once. "How did it happen?"

The Grenadier drew him aside.

"Some Filipino must have seen the sentries, or watched us post them," he said.

"Then——"

"Listen!"

The Grenadier whispered some terse orders to Knox. Then he turned to Señor Garcia and his clerk, who, with a group of their friends, were chatting gaily as though at peace with God and all the world.

"Señor Garcia," said the American, "I have some papers at my office I should like to show you."

"Now?" asked Garcia with a forced smile.

"It would be best to look at them at once—yes."

"We will have time, I judge. Carlos, let us attend."

They went down the street, the three of them, the Filipinos immaculate, debonair, unsuspecting, the Grenadier forcing a flow of talk he had no heart in. Nor did the two suspect his intentions until, coming into headquarters, several armed sentries appeared and surrounded the building.

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"Now," said the Grenadier, without preface, "I want you to tell me just where Segundo is hiding at this minute."

"Segundo, señor?" Garcia could not comprehend at first. "But I thought you said——"

"Never mind the papers. You two were the ringleaders in this plot to murder me, and I want to know where Segundo is *right now!* You'll tell me or take the consequences."

"The *comandante* is utterly mistaken!" Garcia cried.

"I will give you two minutes," was the blunt reply.

"But——"

"And if you tell me without making me any more trouble, I'll let both of you go."

Both shook their heads. They denied any connection with the plot; denied any knowledge of its existence; swore they knew nothing of Segundo's whereabouts. They affirmed it at first in quiet dignity, then grew violent and protested by the Virgin and all the patron Saints that they were as innocent as the babes at birth. Indeed, they inferred that the officer should beg their pardon for even whispering their names in connection with such a deplorable, scandalous, sacrilegious plot.

"Stop before you perjure yourselves further," the officer cut in. "Señor Garcia, I gave you credit for being at least a gentleman on the surface. Preserve your dignity —and tell me the truth."

Garcia, out of breath, merely glared at him.

"You won't, then?" Raising his voice, the officer called three sentries.

Then, "Come with me, señor," he said.

"Why——"

"Come with me, I said."

GARCIA went, his dark face gone gray. Could it be possible that he, *presidente* of the town, scholar of some note and a respected Visayan of caste, would actually be confined by these uncouth dogs? Or perhaps treated with the same respect as a yokel? It galled him. He drew back, protesting. But two healthy men took him by the arms and started to drag him along.

"Best go quietly," admonished the Grenadier.

"Now," he said, when they reached the river-bank, "I am sorry to force this upon you—but you may escape the water if you divulge what you know."

"Never!" the proud old fellow screamed, "Never!"

He cursed the Americans in French, in English, in Spanish and the Visayan dialect —swore he was innocent, cursed them to perdition for a lot of dogs and oppressors, and vowed that, even if he knew Segundo's whereabouts, he would not tell them.

"Into the water with him, then," was the order.

Although he struggled, they picked him up bodily and jammed him into the muddy stream. He gurgled, spouted water, fought and screamed and cried like a madman. But it was of no avail. They dipped and dipped him until he choked out a cry for mercy.

"I'll tell!" was the gist of his cry.

"Good. Again let me say that I'm sorry —more sorry than I can tell you. If you were all that your education and your airs imply, I would feel proud of the Filipino race for producing you. But I hate a perjurer. However, I'll show more respect for your self-respect than you did for your oath, by letting you stop just there. I'll get the rest out of that clerk of yours. You men take Señor Garcia back to the headquarters."

They led him back, sobbing in mortification, befouled with clay and mire. The upstanding dignity implied by his gray hair was gone; and when Carlos saw him, the clerk's eyes popped from his fat face in mortal terror.

Well Carlos knew what that clay meant. It seemed almost a sacrilege that Señor Garcia, the venerable *presidente*, had been thus abused. Had some one told him, he would not have believed it. Yet here was proof before his eyes.

And if they treated Señor Garcia in that manner, what would they do to him?

"Señor Garcia has confessed that there was a plot," said the Grenadier. "Now what have you got to say? Quick, for I'm losing time."

The clerk's eyes darted from face to face. His mouth worked pitifully. Suddenly he groveled on his fat knees and grasped the Grenadier about the legs.

"Get away, get away," cried the officer, ashamed to look on a man in the paroxysms of fear.

They dragged the clerk to a chair.

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"Now tell all you know of this—quick!" they prompted him.

The story came in bursts and many pauses for breath.

YES, there had been a plot to kill the Grenadier. But the Filipinos had discovered the presence of the sentries just before daybreak, and so desisted. Segundo was even now awaiting the word in a hollow to the east of town, out beyond the coconut-grove, unless a man they had sent to warn him had reached him.

At that the Grenadier jumped.

"Lieutenant Grimes, have your troop mount at once—don't wait for saddles—and ride down the beach. Orderly, run to K Troop and tell the first sergeant to have all the men at quarters mount at once and fall in here. Mr. Grimes, I'll take K Troop through the grove—you go down the beach and then cut in opposite that place, and we'll get him together, if he's there."

"What'll we do with these two prisoners, sir?" asked a sentry.

"Take 'em to the guard-house."

As they were expecting some such move, the men raced for the picket-lines and flung themselves on the horses in a rush. They galloped to headquarters and, as directed, Grimes led his squad off down the beach, while the other followed the Grenadier off through the grove. They rode with no saddles, the rifles across their knees.

At the edge of the town they ran into a returning patrol.

"Did you catch any Filipinos trying to get through the lines this morning?" the Grenadier asked.

"One, sir. He's in the guard-house, waiting for you to see him."

"Then they haven't been warned," was his thought.

"All right," he said, "come with us—forward, gallop—ho!"

He drew rein at the edge of the grove and dismounted his men, all save the numbers four.

"Numbers four hold horses," he ordered, "and ones, twos and threes follow suit. Chances are they'll run when we open fire. When we do, you numbers four bring up the horses on the gallop."

The country just beyond this grove is as irregular as the surface of a pot of boiling meal. Here, for no apparent reason, rose a hill on the edge of the flat bottom-land, while beyond it stretched an undulating expanse of projecting hummocks and dipping valleys, some bearded with mangroves, others yellow with cogon-grass, and all running in a sweep away to the hazy mountains and the blue sky in the east. The sun beat down from the great sky-dome with the blaze of a thousand fires.

The men advanced cautiously down the trail, taking care to make no noise. It was possible that a sentry might be stationed somewhere ahead of them. But the chances were as good that Segundo had been forced to do without this precaution, for fear that his man might be discovered by one of the patrols. He must have expected to rush the patrol, in any case.

However, they stole along like so many ghosts. In all that expanse, no living thing appeared to stir. A drone pulsed through the air, like the humming song of a shell.

Suddenly the Grenadier halted. He had reached a defile between two hummocks and, as it made a slight turn to the left, he came into a position that commanded a view a half-mile to the east.

Directly in front of him the ground sloped and ran in a sweep that, studded here and there with low bushes, reached out and expanded around a small blue lagoon. The other side of the lagoon was banked close by a rising denuded hummock. But on the side nearest them, more interesting than lagoon or slopes or hills, was a sight that gripped the officer with the fiercest joy of his life. It was Segundo, and with him his men, all in plain sight, for the first time in his experience.

The leader could be picked out easily. He strode up and down with a subordinate officer, and appeared to be under the stress of impatient excitement. He kept glancing toward town and occasionally took off his white panama and rubbed the black hair angrily. His men, some jacketed, some in undershirts, some barefooted, and all showing a predominancy of dirty white in their dress, lolled about on the ground smoking cigarettes, their rifles between their knees or carelessly thrown on the ground. A broadly striped, gaudily colored shirt stood out in prominence at several places, while they wore an assortment of ammunition pouches that ranged from the Spanish belt to the Prussian leather box. And they were there—they were actually there!—was the Grenadier's exultant thought.

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"FORWARD," he ordered; "double time—ho! Left front into line—ho! As skirmishers—march!"

Before he had yelled "As skirmishers!" his men were running out into the open and swinging into line.

The guerrillas discovered them now. All jumped to their feet, yelling.

With their cries coming down the gentle breeze toward him, the Grenadier yelled, "Fire at will—commence firing!"

He did not pause to give the range, trusting to the men's own judgment.

It proved good. Their rifles crashed out in a bellow that echoed away to the mountains. Following that began the broken, staccato, undulating roll of men firing at will.

Some of the Filipinos stood their ground. But when the slugs began whipping through them and around them and into the lake behind, and Grimes's men joined in with a cross-fire from the north, they broke and ran along the shore of the lake for every available cover. Some fell, twisting and screaming. Others dived into the lagoon. The Grenadier saw Segundo running frantically for a clump of bushes and, when he reached it through a shower of bullets, emerge on the back of a pony.

"*He'll get away!*" the Grenadier wailed in spirit. "Ah!"

His own horses were coming behind him.

"Come on," he yelled, "come on, *come on!*"

No commands were necessary. Each man flew to his horse, the Grenadier taking his with a bound and a kick in the side that set the animal pounding off at a breakneck pace after the running chief. He had neither saber nor rifle with him, but carried his pistol, and this he held ready in his right hand, saving the loads until he could get within range. Behind him galloped a dozen men.

These he soon began to outdistance. He was better mounted by far. He rode a magnificent bay, who, deep of chest and long of limb, carried his great bulk with the ease of a powerful machine.

Segundo flashed into view beyond a clump of trees; went out of sight and into view again atop a rise. This time the Grenadier judged him close enough to fire. He aimed hurriedly, pulled trigger, being careful to lean far out from his horse's head as he did so.

He missed. Segundo looked round, yelled in derision and fired back at his pursuers. The bullet flew wide of them all.

"Now!" whispered the Grenadier, patting the horse. The animal responded with a burst of speed up the rise.

"Now!" yelled the officer as they topped it. This time the bay stretched his belly close to the ground and flew through the air in long, bounding leaps.

The stretch before them was perhaps five hundred yards long. It was free of growths other than the usual grass, whereas its eastern extremity was skirted by a growth of shrubbery that, should Segundo reach it, might effectually hide his movements until he escaped.

The bay seemed fully to appreciate this as he ate up the distance between himself and the pony. They drew to within fifty yards—then forty. At thirty the Grenadier fired, just as Segundo turned and pulled his own trigger.

Both missed again, though the Grenadier felt the air stir near his cheek.

A dozen more leaps placed him so near that he could see the rise and fall of the ridge-like muscles in the rump of the straining pony. A dozen more, and he shot again. He could not tell whether he struck or not, for simultaneously the pony stumbled, sought to recover, failed and fell headlong, Segundo flying on over his head. He rolled over and over on the ground.

The pursuer came off his horse in a bound, firing on the instant he touched earth. And it was well he did so, for the other had scrambled to his knees in frantic haste and attempted to aim. But the Grenadier's bullet struck him in the abdomen, and he sagged forward in a queer, agonized position. The pistol slipped from his fingers.

"You got him!" yelled Jimmy, galloping up.

"I guess I did," panted his friend.

"Whoop!" yelled the irresponsible.

The men joined in, throwing their hats in the air. Their savage joy reflected itself in their Commander's face, and he would have enjoyed "letting out" on his own part. But he checked it. He walked over to Segundo.

"He's dead," he said, bending over him. "Well, I'm glad we didn't have to confine him—he was too good a bad-man to wear shackles! Pick him up, men, and we'll give him a soldier's burial."

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HE REMOUNTED his sweating horse, and they rode back. Firing was still going on in the distance. This soon dwindled. In the space where Segundo's men lay they found some twenty dead and wounded amid their rifles and scattered paraphernalia, and round about some thirty more. Four of the Grenadier's men had been hit, one seriously. The squads came riding back with prisoners numbering close to fifty, and behind one knoll they found Tal Placido, badly wounded. The victory had been a sweeping one; Segundo's band was a thing of the past. They started back with their prisoners and wounded, feeling a wild sense of elation.

The men showed it in their laughter, in their vivid accounts, one to the other, of the details they had witnessed and taken part in. But the Grenadier, who was the best pleased of all, restrained himself to the extent of patting his horse affectionately until, alone in the quarters, he threw his hat against the wall and executed a boyish highland fling.

Jimmy burst in on him in the midst of it. "Wow!" yelled the Grenadier; and, grabbing Jimmy about the waist, he swung him on high as one would a babe, and whirled him about the room until out of breath.

"My ribs—leggo my ribs!" panted Jimmy with a huge grin. "Well," when his friend placed him on his feet, "what are you going to make me when you get up there?"

The other blushed.

"I'll have you cashiered, you blankety-blank scamp," he exclaimed. He slapped Jimmy on the back, sobering. "I must go and see Father Jacques—he had a rather trying experience to-day, and I owe a great deal to him."

"Say, I wonder who told him of this plot?"

"I don't know. Never questioned him as to that. Perhaps through confessional—though I doubt that. I did not feel like questioning him too far."

"Well, I'm *glad*," said Jimmy. "Glad for you. You know, I hope you get what you expect out of this. And say," smiling again when the Grenadier reached the door, "I make a bid for a place at your right hand when they play Lohengrin's Wedding M——"

He had to dodge a hastily but vigorously thrown boot.

CHAPTER XXI

MOTHERING HEART O' WOMEN

A MONTH had passed by since the breaking up of Segundo's company. Temporary peace now reigned about Iligan, that scene of blood for centuries. The *Doña Teresa* had come out and gone, taking with her Señor Garcia, Carlos, Tal Placido, Sun Tung and a number of lesser lights, all shackled in cuffs made from old horseshoes by K Troop's humorous blacksmith, and all save Tal Placido charged with breaking their oath of allegiance, for which they were to be tried at Manila. Tal Placido had refused to take the oath and so was to be held as a prisoner of war.

The one-ration system had been abolished. Now the people were free to till their farms and gather in the market-places as of old. They had been thoroughly whipped, and no doubts of their future actions remained in the Grenadier's mind.

Carmencita he had seen only in an official and impersonal way. Several times he had thought of putting prisoners at work on her plantation, but this, he reasoned, would have placed him in the light of one who covertly seeks favors. He wanted no favors from her, he told himself. There was something of the small boy in his attitude when he thought of her—which was often. He would wait until the *Seward* came back from Manila with the action on his reports—then he would show her.

The reports had gone in on the *Doña Teresa*. They gave full account of every action and the result, and though, of course, the stiff and formal military sentences were entirely free of any remarks on the merits of their originator, he did not doubt that the General would read between the lines and recommend the promotion deserved. Indeed, the actions needed no comment. They spoke for themselves. He had carried out his part; he had captured Segundo—dead; he deserved what he had earned and, as he expected recognition for those men and officers he had warmly recommended in his report for various acts, so he expected recognition for himself. And to-day, as the *Seward* came in, he waited impatiently for the mail he knew she was carrying.

She came in, breasting the glassy bay with her white bows, and dropped anchor

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outside the reef. The lighters hugged up alongside, and shortly a *banca* came ashore with the mail-sack. Controlling his features as best he could—for his fierce elation threatened to break out in continual smiles—he took one bulky envelope addressed to him personally and stepped out of the office.

HE WAS undergoing that peculiar sensation that comes to a man who looks at a sealed missive, feels certain of the great and welcome news it must contain, yet dreads to open it for fear the news has been delayed. He did not want to open it here. The news meant too much to him. He would walk out to the beach, and so to the old deserted dock, where, if his emotions proved too strong for him, he would be away from all prying eyes. With this in view he reached the dock and walked out to its end, the letter burning against his heart.

From her seat in the Q. M. office, Carmencita watched him depart. She had seen the envelope delivered. Instinctively she knew what it contained—action on his reports. She had been long enough in the American army-office to learn something of the red-tape employed therein. And did she not know of his hopes and aims? The very constraint in his attitude told her this was the letter he had been looking for, and when he placed it in his pocket and walked out alone toward the beach Carmencita immediately guessed his desire to be alone and the reasons thereof, and looked after him with dim eyes.

But should he be alone now? What did the envelope contain? He had played a great game with that incisive brain of his, matching it against emergency after emergency, and she knew that this was a crisis in his life. She was still in the mother's attitude, feeling no resentment toward him for the boyish attitude of the last month. Like himself, she too had been impatiently waiting for the arrival of this letter, though from motives far different from his own. If there were only something in it to open his eyes to the hardness of that superficial shell of egoism which now choked the great soul that was in him! Ah, *Madre de Dios*, she wanted her *boy*, her *youth!* her heart cried.

And would that come to pass? Would it? She suddenly knew that in this crisis she would find out, that this crisis would come when he read that letter, and that, if she must ever reach the youth down under that shell, she must be near him when the letter was opened.

It meant her life.

So she rose and followed as discreetly as possible, walking into the east grove and searching the shore through the apertures in the palms until she found him. Then she halted and looked at him musingly, unnoticed by the silent youth.

It was a quiet and secluded spot the Grenadier reached. He could see the entire sweep of the bay from here. Looking down, he could see to the bottom where, above the living coral, a bevy of small fish swam lazily about in search of food. And as he looked they suddenly scurried for the shallow depths; an army of larger fish came in and gave chase to the smaller, who occasionally were caught and devoured at once.

"That's life," he said musingly. "The best must win—and so I have won."

He drew the envelope from his pocket, opened it slowly and then settled himself to read. And he read, and read again; for at first he could not believe his eyes.

A NEW General had taken command. The Grenadier's reports had been gone over carefully. Not one ray of comfort could be drawn from the entire letter. He was censured for freeing the Moro slaves; for attacking the Moros at Maol and not withdrawing as he might have done; for thus insuring the eternal enmity of the Moro datos inland; for killing Moro women; for his "brutal methods in forcing admissions from respected and upright Filipino citizens;" for uncalled-for destruction of property; for standing by while the men took property from the natives; "for laying violent hands on a medical officer in a manner unbecoming an officer and a gentleman;" for not communicating with headquarters for advice in regard to certain moves, and for abusing his position and "taking unto himself the might and power of a czar."

Not one word of credit for his action at the church; not one word of praise of any sort; it ended with a scathing rebuke and the cheerful information that Lieutenant Grimes would immediately supersede him in command, while he, upon the return of the *Seward* from Dapitan, would take pas-

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sage on her to Manila, where he was to be tried for his offenses before a general court martial at a very early date.

It sickened him. A number of times during his life he had endured physical hardships where, having drained his resources, he suffered untold agonies of fatigue and pain. He remembered these now. This blow produced something similar to the after-effects of those travails; a great inertia that seemingly turned his bones to water and filled him with a desire to sleep and sleep and sleep. His shoulders sagged; he licked at his lips and found them dry and hard; he had never been so thoroughly whipped in his life. He suddenly wished to be back at his mother's knee.

HE HAD no idea of how long he had been there when he heard a step near him and saw Carmencita coming along the stringers. He looked at her—a vision of health and sweetness and light—and then down again at the water. In doing so, his eyes fell on the scene beneath him.

A school of fish, some twenty in number, swept in from the outer green depths and gave chase to the smaller fish around the spiles. First had come the wee fins, then a size larger, now these last, bigger than all. And each was seeking the others' lives. The biggest must win. One of the latter, a big cod, flashed after a smaller fish, caught him, and would have devoured him had not another cod, balked of his own prey, sought to wrest it from his mouth. Immediately the first cod released his victim and turned wolfishly on the second, so that in a second the water was churned and whipped to a bloody froth.

A shamed and peculiar light broke over the Grenadier's face.

"What are you looking at?" asked Carmencita, sitting down beside him.

"A lesson," he said slowly.

"Oh—did you, too, see the utter selfishness of all fish?"

"Yes," he muttered, still refusing to meet her eyes. "And I saw more than that," he continued very slowly.

It was the first time she had heard the note of sadness in his voice. She choked a desire to mother him, to reach out and—— She flushed deep at her maidenly thought. But in a way she *did* mother him now, and for his own good.

"I thought—you had trouble—and I came," she said.

"I have had," he answered.

Without further words he handed her the letter.

She read it through, and then looked up and far away across the bay at the old and understanding hills.

"Oh, I *am* sorry!" she whispered at last. "And yet," she stole a look at him, "I am *not* sorry, either. Hasn't it——"

He caught her thought. "Taught me anything?" he asked. "Yes, it has. That and the fish. Oh!" he cried bitterly, "I see it all now." Deep shame reddened his features. "*My* wife—*my* promotion—*my* this and *my* that! Oh, *girl!* What an utter, utter fool I've been!"

She saw that now she must say nothing.

"However," he continued, after a moment of governing himself, "I can see things now in a new light. I can—almost be glad. I *am* glad. At least, I've brought this bloody insurrection to a close around here, and saved the possible deaths of many of my own men, as well as those of the Filipinos. Why, I looked on the natives as mere stepping-stones to my success! Now I see—they are real flesh and blood—and I'm more inclined to think that they are right in their fight for liberty. Anyhow, I'm glad I've accomplished this much. No court martial can take *that* away from me!"

He could not see the face of this girl who long ago had acknowledged to herself that she loved him. A light that is "never on land or sea" filmed her eyes. But he did not look. He could not look. Who, indeed, was he even to think of *her?* A discredited officer—perhaps a cashiered officer after the trial at Manila. Never in his life had he felt so utterly small, so insignificant, so insufficient in his own eyes. Thinking again of the words "*My* wife" and the spirit he had said them in that night, he wished that he might hide his head in shame. Now, when he realized he loved her, ached for her, worshipped her from the depths of his soul, he found her so far above him that he did not dare to look.

She was tempted to let him grovel. But no girl likes to have the man of her choice grovel for long. She must take the lead now. She reached out with her hand.

"Listen," she whispered. "When I told Father Jacques——"

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Miracle of miracles! Was this her hand on his?

"When you told Father Jacques——" he stammered.

"That they were going to murder you ——"

"*You* told Father Jacques!" he cried. He faced her for the first time.

Her eyes dropped before his.

"*You* told Father Jacques!" he repeated in amazement. "Then—oh, *Carmencita!*"

He drew a great breath, as of a man who sees paradise from the depths of hell.

"God!" he cried. "*Don't* play with me!"

"Play with you?" she whispered, raising her eyes that he might see. "How *could* I play with you, my—*boy?*"

She found herself wonderingly drawn within arms that trembled. For a long time the Grenadier could not kiss the lips he had dreamed of, but was only able to press his cheek against hers, while his heart, flooded with the great miracle, beat against hers and made them one.

IT WAS Father Jacques who married them, after the Grenadier had been tried and returned to the command of his troop. He had been reduced two files in rank—which means, not that he had been reduced to a second lieutenancy but that those two captains, whoever they were, who had previously been below him were now placed above him.

And so Father Jacques, looking at the place where he had sat during that trying mass, and then back at Youth glorified before him, was able to say from the richness of his age-old heart:

"*Gloria Tibi, Domine, qui fecit cœlum et terram!*"

It was a very rosy couple he blessed under the love of his uplifted palms.

THE END

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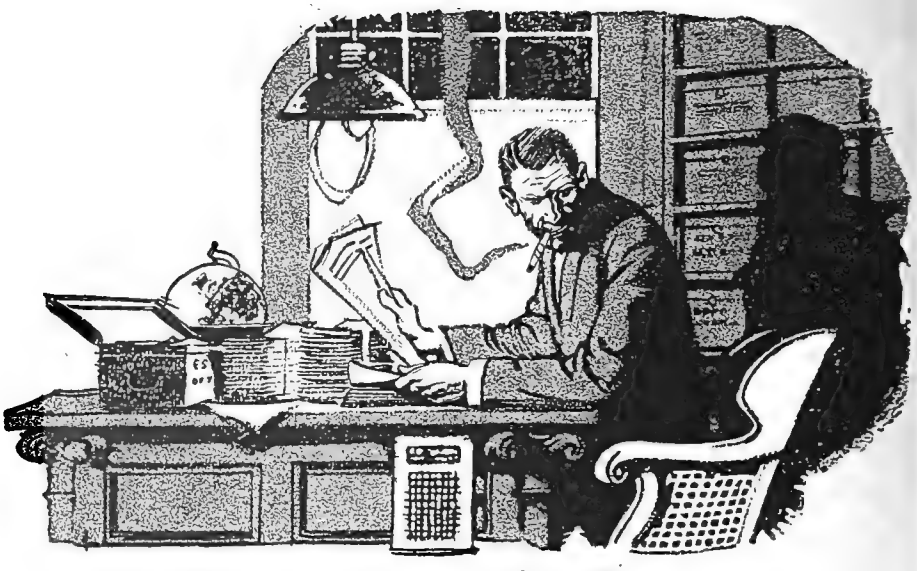

The Perfect Criminal

By Edgar Wallace

MR. FELIX O'HARA GOLBEATER knew something of criminal investigation, for he had been a solicitor for eighteen years and had been engaged in work which brought him into touch with the criminal classes. His ingenuity and shrewd powers of observation had often enabled him to succeed in securing a conviction where ordinary police methods had failed.

A spare man, on the right side of forty, he was distinguished by a closely cropped beard and shaggy eyebrows, and in the cultivation of these he had displayed extraordinary care and patience.

It is not customary, even in legal circles, where so many curious practises obtain, to bother overmuch with one's eyebrows, but O'Hara Golbeater was a far-seeing man, and he anticipated a day when interested people would be looking for those eyebrows of his, when their portraiture would occupy space on the notice-boards of police stations —for, Mr. Felix O'Hara Golbeater had no illusions and was well aware of a most vital fact, which was that you can not fool all men all the time.

Therefore he was eternally on the *qui vive* for that mysterious man who would certainly appear on the scene some day and who would see through Golbeater the lawyer, Golbeater the trustee, Golbeater the patron of field-sports and, last and greatest of distinctions, Golbeater the intrepid aviator, whose flights had caused something of a sensation in the little Buckingham village where he had his "country-seat." And he had no desire to be seen through.

HE WAS sitting in his office one night in April. His clerks had long since gone home, and the caretaker, whose duty it was to clean up, had also left.

It was not Felix O'Hara Golbeater's practise to remain at the office until 11 P.M., but the circumstances were exceptional and justified the unusual course.

Behind him were a number of japanned steel boxes. They were arranged on shelves

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and occupied one-half of the wall-space from floor to ceiling.

On each box was painted in neat white figures the name of the man, woman or corporation for whose documents the receptacle was reserved. There was "The Anglo-Chinese Pottery Syndicate" (in liquidation), "The Erly Estate," "The Late Sir George Gallinger," to name only a few.

Golbeater was mainly interested in the box inscribed "Estate of the Late Louisa Harringay," and this stood wide-open on his polished desk, its contents sorted into orderly heaps.

From time to time he made notes in a small but stout book by his side, notes for his confidential guidance apparently, for the book possessed a hinged lock.

In the midst of his inspection there came a sharp knock at the door of his sanctum.

He looked up, listening, his cigar stiffly held between his even white teeth.

The knock came again and he rose, crossed the carpeted floor softly and bent his head, as though by this process he could intensify his auricular powers.

Again the visitor rapped on the panel of the door, this time impatiently. He followed up his summons by trying the door.

"Who's there?" asked Golbeater softly.

"Fearn," came the reply.

"Just one moment."

Golbeater stepped back to the desk swiftly and bundled all the documents into the open box. This he replaced in the rack; then, returning to the door, he unlocked it.

A young man stood in the doorway. His long raglan was splashed with rain. In his plain kindly face, embarrassment as at an unpleasant mission struggled for mastery with the expression of annoyance peculiar to the Englishman kept waiting on the door-mat.

"Come in," said Golbeater, and opened the door wide.

The young man stepped into the room and slipped off his coat.

"Rather wet," he apologized gruffly.

The other nodded.

He closed the door carefully and locked it.

"Sit down," he said, and dragged forward a chair. His steady black eyes did not leave the other's face. He was all alert and tense, obeying the atavistic instinct of defense. The very angle of his cigar spoke caution and defiance.

FRANK FEARN seated himself.

"I saw your light—I thought I'd drop in," he said awkwardly.

There was a pause.

"Been aeroplaning lately?"

Golbeater removed his Havana and examined it attentively.

"Yes," he said and spoke confidentially to the cigar.

"Queer that a fellow like you should take it up," said the other with a glint of reluctant admiration in his eyes. "I suppose studying criminals and being in touch with them—helps your nerves—and things."

Fearn was marking time. You could almost hear the tramp of his intellectual boots.

He began again.

"Do you really believe, Golbeater, that a chap could—could escape from justice if he really tried?"

A wild thought which was half a hope flashed through the lawyer's mind. Had this young fool been adventuring outside the law? Had he overstepped the mark too? Young men do mad things.

And if he had, that would be salvation for Felix O'Hara Golbeater, for Fearn was engaged to the young heiress who had inherited Miss Harringay's fortune—whose secrets lay in the tin box he had just tucked back on the rack. And Fearn was the man of all men that the solicitor feared. He feared him because he was a fool, a stubborn fool and an inquisitive fool.

"I really believe that," he answered. "My contention, based on experience, is that in a certain type of crime the offender need never be detected, and in other varieties, even though he is detected, he can, given a day's start, avoid arrest."

He settled down in his chair to pursue his favorite theory—one which had been the subject of discussion the last time he and Fearn had met at the club.

"Take myself for instance," he said. "Suppose I were a criminal—one of the swell mob. What could be easier than for me to mount my machine, sail gaily away to France, descending where I knew fresh supplies awaited me and continuing my journey to some unlikely spot. I know of a dozen places in Spain where the aeroplane could be hidden."

The young man was eying him with a glum and dubious expression.

"I admit," Golbeater went on with an

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easy wave of his cigared hand, "that I am exceptionally placed. But really in any case it would only have been a matter of prearrangement; elaborate and painstaking preparation which any criminal could take. It is open to him to follow the same course. But what do we find? A man systematically robs his employer, and all the time he is deluding himself with the belief that a miracle will happen which will allow him to make good his defalcations. Instead of recognizing the inevitable, he dreams of luck; instead of methodically planning his departure, he employs all his organizing power in hiding to-day the offense of yesterday."

He waited for the confession he had encouraged. He was aware that Fearn dabbled on the Stock Exchange; that he was in the habit of frequenting race-courses.

"H'm," said Fearn. His lean brown face twisted into a momentary grimace.

"It's a pretty good thing," he said, "that you aren't on the lawless side, isn't it? I suppose you aren't?"

Now Felix O'Hara Golbeater was a man very shrewd in the subtleties of human nature and very wise in the reading of portents. He knew the truth which is spoken with a smile, and may be taken either as an exhibition of humor or a deadly accusation, and in the question put to him with quizzical good humor he recognized his finish.

The young man was watching him eagerly, his mind filled with vague apprehensions, so vague and so indefinite that he had spent four hours walking up and down the street in which Golbeater's offices were before he had screwed himself up to the interview.

The lawyer laughed.

"It would be rather awkward for you if I were," he said, "since I have at this moment some sixty thousand pounds of your fiancée's money in my possession."

"I thought it was at the bank!" said the other quickly.

The other shrugged his shoulders.

"So it is," he said, "but none the less it is in my possession. The magic words, 'Felix O'Hara Golbeater,' inscribed in the southeast corner of a check, would place the money in my hands."

"Oh!" said Felix.

He made no attempt to disguise his relief.

He got up from his chair, a somewhat gauche young man, as all transparently honest young men are, and spoke the thought which was uppermost in his mind.

"I don't care twopence about Hilda's money," he said abruptly. "I've enough to live on, but—for her sake, of course—one has to be careful."

"Oh, you're being careful all right," said Golbeater, the corners of his mouth twitching, though the beard hid the fact from his visitor. "You had better put a detective on the bank to see that I don't draw the money and bolt."

"I have," blurted the young man in some confusion. "At least—well, people say things, d'ye know—there was a lot of talk about that Meredith legacy case. Really, Golbeater, you didn't come well out of that."

"I paid the money," said Golbeater cheerfully, "if that's what you mean."

He walked to the door and opened it.

"I hope you won't get wet," he said politely.

Fearn could only mutter an incoherent commonplace and go stumbling and groping down the dark stairs into the street.

GOLBEATER returned to the inner office. He wasted no time in speculation. He knew that the game was up. From an inner drawer in his safe he took a memorandum, and glanced down it.

Twelve months before, an eccentric Frenchman, who had occupied a little country-house in Wiltshire, had died, and the property had come into the market; not, curiously enough, into the English market, because its late owner had been the last of a line of French exiles who had made their home in England since the days of the Revolution. The heirs, having no desire to continue residence in a land which had no associations for them, had placed the sale of the property in the hands of a firm of French notaries.

Golbeater, a perfect French scholar and an earnest student of the Parisian papers, came to know of the impending sale. He had purchased it through a succession of agents. It had been refurnished from Paris. The two servants who controlled the tiny menage had been hired and were paid from Paris, and neither of these staid servitors, who received remittances and letters bearing the Parisian post-mark, associated

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M. Alphonse Didet, the employer they had never seen, with the London solicitor.

Nor did the good people of Letherhampton, the village adjoining the property, trouble their heads overmuch about the change of proprietorship. They had never seen the new squire; anyway, one "Frenchie" was very much like another. They had grown up accustomed to the eccentricities of the exiled aristocrats, and regarded them with the same indifference which they applied to the other objects of the landscape. They felt that contempt which the bucolic mind reserves for the ignorant fellows who do not speak its language.

Also there was in a different neighborhood—near Whitstable—a little bungalow, simply furnished, whither Golbeater was in the habit of making week-end excursions. Most important and most valuable of its contents was a motor-cycle; and in the cloak-room of a London terminus were two trunks, old and battered, covered with the labels of foreign places and the picturesque advertisements of foreign hotels.

Felix O'Hara Golbeater was very thorough in his methods. But then he had the advantage of other's experiences. He had seen the haphazard criminal, and had profited by the lesson to be found in the untimely end which rewards carelessness in flight.

He walked to the fireplace, struck a match and burned the memorandum to ashes. There was nothing else to burn, for his was the practise of clearing up as he went along. From the safe he took a thick package, opened it and revealed a tightly compressed wad of bank-notes, English and French. They represented the greater part of sixty thousand pounds, which, if every man and woman had their own, should have been at the bankers of Miss Hilda Harringay.

The whole of the sixty thousand was not there, because there were other deficiencies which had claimed more urgent and pressing settlement.

He pulled on a rain-coat swiftly, artistically thrust a half-finished letter in the open drawer of his desk, put out the light and went out. The advantage of being a bachelor occurred to him as the theater-train pulled out of Charing Cross station. He had nothing to trouble his conscience; he was the ideal defaulter.

From Sevenoaks station he made his way on foot along the two-mile road which led to the hangar. He glanced over his French monoplane, then spent the night in the shed reading by the light of a portable electric light. Long before dawn he had changed into his mechanic's kit, leaving his every-day working-clothes neatly folded in a locker.

It was a perfect day for a flight, and at five in the morning, with the assistance of two laborers on their way to work, he started the aeroplane and rose easily over the sleeping town. It was his good fortune that there was no wind, more fortunate still that there was a mist on the sea. He had headed for Whitstable and, when he heard the waters washing beneath him in the darkness, he came down and found the shore. He recognized a coast-guard station and went on for a mile, keeping in touch with the beach.

II

THE newspapers which published an account of the aeroplane-tragedy described how the machine was found floating upside down two miles from shore. They described the search by coast-guards and police for the body of the unfortunate Felix O'Hara Golbeater, who in an endeavor to reach his bungalow had evidently got lost in the mist and was drowned. They observed in guarded language that he was making for the French coast, and with good reason.

But none of them described how Felix O'Hara Golbeater had set his planes at a sky-climbing angle when only a few feet from the water—and from the water's edge by the same token—and had dropped into the sea with close on sixty thousand pounds in the waterproof pocket of his overalls.

Nor how, with surprising swiftness, he had reached the isolated little bungalow on the shore, had stripped his wet things on the veranda, had entered, changed, and reappeared to make his sodden mechanic's kit into a portable bundle; nor how he had placed this in a specially weighted bag and dropped it down a well at the back of the house. Nor how with incredible rapidity he had removed his beard and his eyebrows, with such tidyness of operation that not so much as a single hair was ever found by the police.

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None of these things were described for the very simple reason that they were not known, and there was no reporter sufficiently imaginative to picture them.

In the early hours of the morning, a clean-shaven, young-looking motor-cyclist, goggled and clad in a shapeless mackintosh kit, went spinning back to London, stopping only in such towns and at such hostelries as motor-cyclists most frequent. He reached London after nightfall. His motor-cycle he left at a garage, together with his wet waterproofs. He had considered a more elaborate scheme for disposing of them, but he did not regard it as necessary, nor was it.

Felix O'Hara Golbeater had ceased to be. He was as dead as though indeed he lay swaying to and fro on the floor of the ocean.

M. Alphonse Didet from the porter of the Baggage Department demanded in good French, and in broken English not quite so good, the restoration of his two trunks.

As for Letherhampton, the expected Frenchman had arrived or returned (they were rather vague as to whether or not he had already stayed at the château) and it served as a filler to conversations heavily charged with agricultural problems and the iniquities of Welsh statesmanship.

In the meantime, London with breathless interest discussed the story of Felix O'Hara. Scotland Yard conducted a swift examination of Mr. Golbeater's Bloomsbury offices, and of Mr. Golbeater's Kensington flat, and of Mr. Golbeater's banking-account, but though they found many things which interested them, they did not discover any money.

A white-faced girl, accompanied by a lean and homely young man, interviewed the detective in charge of the case.

"Our theory," said the policeman impressively, "is that in endeavoring to effect an escape to the French coast he met with a fatal accident. I think he is dead."

"I don't," said the young man.

The detective thought he was a fool, but considered it inexpedient to say so.

"I'm sure he's alive," said Fearn vigorously. "I tell you he's too diabolically clever. If he wanted to leave England, why should he not have gone by last night's mail-boat? There was nothing to prevent him."

"I thought you employed private detectives to watch the boats?"

The young man blushed.

"Yes," he confessed, "I had forgotten that."

"We'll circularize all the stations," the detective went on, "but I must confess that I do not expect to find him."

TO THE credit of the police it must be said that they went to work in no half-hearted fashion. The bungalow at Whitstable was searched from end to end, without result. There was no trace of him. Even the mirror at which Golbeater had shaved was thick with dust. This had been one of the first articles of furniture the detective had examined.

The ground about had been searched as systematically, but it had been a wet day when the fugitive had departed and moreover he had carried his motor-cycle—at some discomfort to himself—until he had reached the road.

His flat gave no indication of his whereabouts. The half-finished letter rather supported the theory which the police had formed that he had had no intention of making his hurried exit.

Fortunately the case was sufficiently interesting to the French journals to enable Felix O'Hara Golbeater to acquire a working-knowledge of what was going on. Punctually every morning there arrived at his château *Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Matin*. He did not patronize English papers; he was much too clever for that. In the enterprising columns of the *Matin* he discovered something about himself, all that he wanted to know; and that all, most satisfactory.

He settled down to the comfortable life of his country-house. He had planned the future with an eye to detail. He gave himself six months in this beautiful little prison of his. At the end of that time, he would, by an assiduous correspondence, tactfully and scientifically directed, have established his identity as M. Alphonse Didet beyond any fear of identification. At the end of six months he would go away, to France perhaps, by excursion or, more elaborately, by sailing-yacht.

For the moment he gave himself over to the cultivation of his roses, to the study of astronomy, to which the late owner's tiny

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observatory invited him, to the indictment of a voluminous correspondence with several learned societies situated in France.

NOW there was at Letherhampton in those days a police superintendent who was something of a student. There were unkindly people who expressed the opinion that his studies did not embrace one necessary to him in his profession —the study of criminology.

Superintendent Grayson was a self-made man and a self-educated man. He was the sort of individual who patronizes Home Correspondence Schools and by a modest outlay and an enormous capacity for absorbing, in a parrot-like fashion, certain facts obscure to the average individual, he had become in turn an advertising-expert, a civil engineer of passable merit, a journalist and a French and Spanish scholar. His French was of the variety which is best understood in England, preferably by the professors of the Home Correspondence Schools, but of this fact the superintendent lived in blissful ignorance, and he yearned for an opportunity of experimenting upon a real Frenchman.

Before the arrival of M. Alphonse Didet he had called many times at the château and had spoken in their native language with the two servants who were established there. Being poor ignorant menials, they did not, of course, understand the classic language he spoke, and he dismissed his uncomprehending victims as being provincial, though as a matter of fact they were Parisian born and bred.

With M. Alphonse on the scene, Superintendent Grayson searched round for an excuse to call, in the same helpless fashion that the amateur picture-hanger looks round for the hammer at the critical moment. The ordinary sources of inspiration were absent. M. Didet, being a French subject, could not be summoned to a jury, he paid his rates duly, he had never run any person down in his motor-car, and indeed, did not possess one.

The inspector was in despair of ever finding an opportunity, when an unfortunate member of the constabulary was badly injured in the execution of his duty, and the county started a subscription for the man, with the permission of the Chief Constable. Inspector Grayson was entrusted with the collection of local offerings.

Thus it was he came to the Château Blanch.

M. Alphonse Didet watched the burly figure, arriving booted and spurred, frogged across the chest and beribboned, as a superintendent with some army experience should be, and tapped his teeth with his pen speculatively. He opened a drawer of his desk and took out his revolver. It was loaded. He threw open the chamber and extracted the cartridges, throwing them, an untidy handful, into the waste-paper basket. Because, if this meant arrest, he was not quite sure what he would do, but he was absolutely certain that he would not be hanged.

Paul, the elderly butler, announced the visitor.

"Let him come in," said M. Alphonse, and posed easily in the big armchair, a scientific work on his knee, his big spectacles perched artistically askew on his nose; he looked up under raised eyebrows, as the officer entered, rose, and with true French courtesy, offered him a seat.

Clearing his throat the superintendent began in French.

He wished Monsieur good-morning, he was desolated to disturb the professor learned at his studies, but helas!—an accident terrible had befallen a gendarme brave of the force municipal. (It was the nearest the good man could get to county constabulary, and it served.)

The other listened and understood, breathing steadily through his nose long long sighs of relief, and feeling an extraordinary shakiness of knee, a sensation he had never thought to experience.

He too was desolated: what could he do?

The superintendent took from his pocket a folded sheet of manuscript. He explained in French the purport of the appeal which headed it, giving the ancestry and social position of the great names which offered their patronage. Huge sprawling names they were, monstrously indistinct, save in the money column, where prudence and self-preservation had advised that the figures of the donations should be unmistakable. What a relief! Alphonse Didet squared his shoulders and filled his lungs with the air of freedom and respectability.

Very gaily within, though outwardly sedate, and still the French professor with spectacles askew, he stepped to his desk. What should he give?

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"How much are a hundred francs?" he asked over his shoulder.

"Four pounds," said the inspector proudly.

So M. Alphonse Didet signed his name, put four pounds carefully in the column allotted for the purpose, took a hundred-franc note from his drawer and handed it with the subscription list to the inspector.

There was some polite bowing and complimentary speeches murmured on both sides. The superintendent took his departure and M. Alphonse Didet watched him down the path with every sense of satisfaction and pleasure.

That night, when he was sleeping the sleep of the just, two men from Scotland Yard entered his room and arrested him in bed. Yes, they arrested this most clever of criminals, because on the subscription list he had signed "Felix O'Hara Golbeater" in a hand which was bold and exuberant.

Unfound Treasures of Ancient Days

by Cromwell Childe

BURIED treasures have long been a favorite theme of romance. Now they have become the practical investment of hard-headed financial syndicates who scent vast gains at costs that are relatively insignificant. Paltry hundreds of thousands of dollars are not considered. These men are seeking, tenaciously and with modern equipment at their back, the billions of the wealth of ancient princes, fortunes beyond computing.

Everything else is small beside these wonderful hidden treasures of monarchs. Most of them are so great that they are not thought of in terms of money at all. The least important of any of these quests promises to unearth fifty millions.

In the ruins of Carthage, Italians are digging for the vault that holds the huge store of gold and gems hidden by Genseric the Vandal. In India, an expedition, financed by Englishmen and with the direct approval of the Indian Government, has gone out into the heart of Bengal to bring back the jewels and ivories, costly woods and precious coin concealed in a haunted mosque by Shahamet Jung, Begum of Murshedabad.

Three great treasure-hunts are now being

See note at end.

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pursued in France. In Carcassonne they are searching for the loot of Alaric the Goth; in Paris for the amazing wealth gained by the sacking of the churches by Julian the Apostate, Emperor of Rome; and in Avignon for the lost treasures of the Popes. Not one of the colossal heaps of wealth has ever been unearthed. In every case it is known approximately where they lie.

In not a single instance, however, is the recovery of these treasures to be accomplished by a handful of men and by limited funds. Each is a powerful business enterprise backed by ample capital. Expert engineering will be required. No desert islands are to be invaded quietly by a few brave adventurers. Machinery will count for more than stout, willing hands. A year ago ADVENTURE told of a young American named Spaulding, supposed to have located the tombs of the great Kahns of Tartary with their tons of rubies, diamonds and pearls. If Spaulding found them he never returned to tell the tale, nor brought out of the wilds his famous "stake." He is believed to have been murdered.

The great expeditions now on the track of these huge hidden treasures of the ancient princes, some of them fifteen centuries back, may not be successful. The treasures may not be there; no one can say positively until he has seen them. One chance in a thousand remains that history and fable may all be wrong. But once they are found, there will be no murder and no stealing. The millions or billions will be put under a strong guard, and not a jewel will slip out of the syndicate's hands.

THE TREASURE OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

AS PICTURESQUE a story as has ever been told is that of the buried treasure of Carcassonne. Carcassonne is a famous medieval city of Southern France, which differs little to-day from what it was in the age of chivalry. It dates back, however, far beyond this. While Rome was yet in all its glory, Carcassonne existed. In 70 A. D. it was a prosperous outpost of Roman civilization, the seat of kings, and it remained a power and a stronghold when savage tribe after savage tribe swept over it during the Dark Ages.

Somewhere under its massive walls, far, far underground, to be reached by passages built two thousand years ago, is the treasure certain wealthy capitalists are seeking. It is one of the world's very greatest heaps of lost riches, for in it, and no one knows how much more there is, is the treasure of Solomon's Temple. Alaric the Goth carried this away from Rome, with much other wonderful loot. Carcassonne was safe; Carcassonne had three old secret passages that could never be penetrated. Alaric cached his vast riches here. Not a single marauder has ever been able to reach them.

Ancient records make it certain that Solomon's treasure was brought to Rome, Titus having sacked Jerusalem. Even for those days the treasure was splendid. Nothing of greater value existed in that period of the world's history. There were the golden candlestick, the jeweled breastplate of the High Priest, golden boxes full of offerings, diamonds, pearls, rubies; many a traditionary gem, and jeweled sacred vessels. For ten centuries the Jews had been lavishing their riches for these precious belongings of their great sacred center. Nothing was too magnificent or grand. When the Temple was pillaged through the centuries, every jewel was replaced. Thus no emperor brought a richer, vaster trophy to Rome. It was one of the great exploits of the twelve Cæsars.

Rome then was at its height. Over three hundred years slipped away, marked by many invasions. Solomon's treasure still remained. It stayed till Alaric came. With his carrying off of the precious relics to Carcassonne, all further trace of this and his other loot has been lost.

Why? As nearly as can be told—and the men who have financed this expedition of to-day are sure enough of the conditions to invest a great sum of money on the chance—the treasures, those of Solomon's Temple and the sacking of Rome, were buried so deep that neither Visigoth, Saracen nor Frank could find the secret vault. The years passed, and one tribe after another was swept away. Gradually, it is supposed, the secret was forgotten.

Solomon's treasure and its companion riches may be under the great walls with their Visigoth towers, fortifications solid as if they had been built only yesterday. Or they may lie far below some of the old private gardens. Nobody knows. There is nothing to guide the seeker.

In Carcassonne not long ago some old people talked. They told some interesting

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things about this medieval town and the riches in its bowels. That the treasure is there, under their feet, is no news to the descendants of past generations in this off-to-one-side picturesque corner of the world.

"Every child," said one of them, "knows that Alaric brought the treasures of Solomon's Temple to his stronghold at Carcassonne. We who have always lived here know it from father to son. They were hidden in a subterranean treasure-room. Gontran, King of the Burgunds, took the town by storm in 585, but had no time to seek the treasure, for he was promptly chased out. Those were terrible sieges. The Saracens came up from Spain in 725. They overwhelmed the walls and made Carcassonne their northern capital. But they never found the treasure."

The old man might have gone on still further. He might have told how Pepin and his Franks broke down more of the wall in 765, killing until not a Saracen was left, and how none of the kings of Carcassonne for five hundred years after that time ever discovered the hidden chamber. There is also to be added the fact that Louis IX. of France was another persistent and ineffective seeker.

There are traditions that great underground galleries lead to the treasure-chamber from a well and from a tower. There are no less than five wells of the oldest period and twenty-eight towers. Underground passages are numerous. Beneath the walls and the adjoining old gardens, one of these passages may be blundered into with very little trouble. Many are great in size, substantially built and high-arched, but all end in cave-ins. The dirt, débris and rock are so tightly packed in these barriers that they are practically impregnable. The secret vault holding the much-to-be-desired treasure may be anywhere in them.

THE MOSQUE OF HAUNTED RUBIES

FROM the ancient Romans and the barbarians who finally vanquished them to a native prince of India, "Old Bombay's Tyrant," is only a short step, looked at romantically. A treasure not so great as the treasure of Solomon, but substantial enough, being estimated at over fifty million dollars, awaits picking. It is as reasonably sure as any treasure can be. It has been left where it is, untouched, for much more than a hundred years, due to the fact that it is in the center of a deserted city, in a chamber or vault of a haunted mosque, and all that have tried to gain admittance to it have strangely fallen dead. No native will approach the mosque that holds the treasure, for the old potentate, when he built his strong room, walled up living slaves in it.

English noblemen and a few rich commoners of that country have organized to get these buried jewels, rarities of woods and stones and gold that this Begum of long ago put in this good, safe, romantic place. A party of unemotional engineers and excavation-experts have gone forward. There are few richer hoards in India than it is certain is to be found within the mosque of Shahamet Jung of Murshedabad. Five great-granddaughters of the old Begum still survive. They have consented to the ghostly, dangerous raid, and are to get fifty per cent. of the spoil. The Indian Government takes twenty-five per cent. of whatever is secured.

The mosque is very beautiful. Though half ruined and not tenanted for a century, it is still a stately building of white. It has graceful minarets at each corner and is decked with many fine carvings. It stands in the center of former splendid gardens on the shores of the "Lake of Pearls," now nearly dry, stagnant and marshy. A forgotten city surrounds it, and white-bearded sacred monkeys leap up and down its walls. Murshedabad, once the capital of Bengal, is now a place of desolation.

There is no question but that Shahamet Jung was immensely rich. The story is that he put away a substantial slice of his wealth in this safe and sure manner to save it from the British, who were then becoming very powerful. The treasure, some say, is in the mosque itself. Others argue it is in a little building alongside, sixty feet long, twelve high and twenty broad, of extremely well-built masonry. This is, actually, a "strong-room," as much so as if constructed by the most expert safe-builders. Its walls by this time have very nearly the consistency of steel, and are almost as difficult to break into. The prevailing belief is that the jewels, gold and ivories must be in this masonry "strong-room" of many generations past, and every native regards it with superstitious awe. Every attempt made in the past hundred years to find this treasure in it has been disastrous and tragic. Not a man has

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come back to tell the tale. Plainly some awful fate awaits every man that dares. What is it? Will a corps of engineers, an army of guards, be able to break the spell? That is what modern financiers are going to find out, no matter what it may cost.

SIR HENRY WALTON'S CLUELESS DEATH

THERE was Sir Henry Walton of Warwickshire, who with ten picked men went out, over a hundred years ago, to carry away these riches. This is the earliest authentic attempt on record. The next morning after that fateful afternoon and night the bodies of every one of the eleven brave men were found stark and mutilated on the floor of the mosque. What had happened? No one was living to say.

Ten years ago some courageous Bengalese, direct descendants of the Begum, caring nothing for the rumors of death that every native spoke of with bated breath, made a plan for broaching the mysterious chamber. They cut a vast slit in the solid, unyielding wall. History again repeated itself. Not a man was left alive. They never even saw the riches. The following day their bodies were found, once more mutilated in a marvelous way.

The natives attribute it to sorcery, to the vengeance of the higher powers. The souls of the slaves so cruelly walled up in the treasure-vault are seeking revenge, they declare. But modern science, scorning ghosts and viewing India with a sternly practical eye, has another explanation. It is taken from the pages of Rudyard Kipling, and seems fully probable, very likely correct, and the solution of this tremendous, deep mystery.

In the treasure-vault, left so long unguarded, unapproached, deserted, there are doubtless huge serpents, great cobras, poisonous pythons. A cool, quiet chamber like this, never entered, dark and forbidding, would be an ideal resting-place for them. More than one treasure of kings in the Orient has been known to have been guarded by the kings of serpents. Why not this mighty treasure of Murshedabad?

The biggest pythons, however, the most monstrous of cobras, will have no terrors for a corps of engineers with modern equipment of guns, excavating-tools and explosives. Where the ordinary man or small group of men would be at the mercy of these forces of the jungle, the well-financed treasure-hunter of to-day is specially protected and does not need to delay. An oxyacetylene lamp, whose flame will cut through the hardest metals and which will be a part of the equipment, will guard against such sudden death as explorers of the past have known. No matter where they lie, the old Begum's treasures can not much longer stay hidden.

There is much strange and romantic history as to the scene of this treasure. The palace beside it was known as Mhoti Jheel. Clive, the conqueror of India and the maker of the Indian nation as it is to-day, lived there for a time. So did Sir Warren Hastings. Here came Watts, the British agent —disguised as a *purdah nashin* lady, traveling in a covered palanquin—and concluded a treaty with Meer Jaffa, a great Bengalese officer under Seraj-ud-Dowlah. This was after the Begum of the treasure had gone to his rest, and a usurper captured the palace and the city and drove the pioneers shrieking from it. But Seraj-ud-Dowlah did not get the treasure. Why not, no one knows. He ruled Murshedabad with an iron hand, but the precious things in their walled-up chamber were not for him.

"By day, the great gray monkeys swing from trees which hedged the marble lattices of queens' apartments; at night, jackals prowl where princes feasted, where a kingdom was bargained for, where the loveliest women of the age were crowned or beggared as their favor waxed or waned, where murders as wanton and relentless as history ever mirrored were committed, where the beautiful dancing-girl, Fazai, who cost a lac of rupees, and weighed but forty-four pounds, was entombed alive to salve the injured vanity of Seraj-ud-Dowlah.

"Current tradition ascribes to Murshedabad enchanted places, ghostly cavalcades and wailing spirits, besides the haunted treasure-chamber, and surely a city was never more fitly haunted. It is now less a city than a sepulcher, a vast tomb, crumbling beneath the stress of weather, strangling amid the tenacious onslaught of the jungle."

CARTHAGE AND A MODERN SYNDICATE

ANCIENT Carthage bids fair, too, to furnish some enormous profits for the Italian expedition that is now at work

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among its ruins. Carthage was once the wealthiest city of the ancient world. Though destroyed by the Romans, it came back again, in another era, to much of its former grandeur. Then the Vandals swept down from the North. In the year 429 they conquered Africa, and later, having made themselves a power along the Mediterranean, ravaged Italy and sacked Rome. The Vandal king of these times was one Genseric. It is the treasure he made off with and is known to have carried to Carthage that is the object of this Italian quest.

Many wild tales have been told of this loot of Genseric the Vandal. Some old accounts note it as the greatest hoard of history. The Vandals were pitiless, spared nothing, placing aboard their famous fleet every precious possession of Rome they could find. It is no wonder their name has become a synonym of the destroyer, the looter and the devastator. All these things which Genseric carried to his secret hiding-place at Carthage were lost sight of after his death, never recovered by his successors and finally buried in the last and final fall of that metropolis when the wild Arabs razed it, two hundred years later. Some authorities have claimed that the loot of Solomon's Temple was among these riches. That is not so, but there is wealth quite as valuable.

The Vandals ravaged all of Italy as well as Rome. Their Spanish king was a great military genius. He was so powerful and so successful that he not only ferried millions of treasure over the blue Mediterranean, but stole from the city its empress, Eudocia. He had been asked by her to be her ally against the usurper Maximus. The big barbarian agreed. He proved victorious, and then, master of Rome, brutally made the queen his captive.

Just where this treasure is to be found in the ruins of Carthage the experts who have embarked on the adventurous quest do not know. The famous old city covered a great area, about twenty miles from the present Tunis. It had at one time a population of three-quarters of a million, and, like every other ancient metropolis, was laid out on a lavish scale compared with the congested modern city. When it comes to be realized that it is not the remains of buildings that are to be sought for, but a vault, or probably vaults, buried far underground and naturally concealed even when the city was in its prime, the vastness of this expedition's task may be appreciated. It is very likely a quest that will take years and use up a small fortune before a dollar's worth of the loot is reached.

THE LOST TREASURES OF THE POPES

WHAT are the Lost Treasures of the Popes? How much do they approximate in money? Some have said twenty millions of dollars, but the value is certain to be far above that. Are these lost papal treasures real, or are the stories of fabulous amounts said to be buried all a dream and a fantasy? Is this particular tale of hidden treasure, persistently repeated, only one of the legends of the Middle Ages that may possibly be only a legend?

The treasures of the Popes that have never been recovered and still wait some lucky finder are real enough in the opinion of some very good authorities. They are certainly real enough for several wealthy Frenchmen to be willing to invest money in exploring underground below Avignon, France, the picturesque city on the Rhône, one hundred and fifty miles from the big manufacturing town of Lyons, the seat of papal power for sixty-nine years. It will be a costly piece of exploration, too. Six hundred years have gone by since the Fathers of the Church were forced to fly from Rome and live in the old French city. Just where they buried the priceless articles they brought with them and acquired in the next hundred years can not be surmised. It is only reasonably sure that these riches lie somewhere under the Palace of the Popes or in its immediate vicinity, perhaps far under the splendid gardens, perhaps under the floor of the great church. If any one knows, he can not be induced to say. Not one of the records throws any light. The expedition will have to explore every foot of Avignon thoroughly. The treasure may be precisely where it is not expected. Nobody knows what will be found underground, except rock.

Rock these modern treasure-hunters, who are taking up their quest in the most scientific of ways, are certain to meet with, and this will add enormously to the difficulty and expense. Probably far below the surface will be found connecting galleries. Almost anything is possible. Important documents may be discovered, and new chapters of history may be made. But the interest is,

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of course, in the real treasures themselves. Through the Middle Ages the Roman Church collected lavishly, absorbing what was most beautiful and costly. These papal treasures will be the rarest of gems in the most superb of settings, and an unending quantity of coin. Such, at all events, is the prediction of the experts. Avignon below the surface is likely to prove one of the great storehouses of the world.

There is no lack of adventure in this flight of the Popes across Europe, burdened down with their special belongings, the rarities that were theirs. Strictly speaking, of course, there was only one pope that made his way to Avignon. He carried, however, his Papal court with him, and other popes sat in his seat in after years. In the century altogether that made up this Babylonian captivity a most curious and monumental city arose. Its citadel-like "Palace of the Popes" is of the first interest. It took thirty-four years to build it, with its six towers and its walls eighteen feet thick. Like other cities of its day a continuous belt of walls encircles it.

Avignon was a city made to order, created in a place that could be well fortified if it came to encroachments. Those were times of excitement with the Holy Fathers. That is why no one knows its secrets below ground, and the mystery of its lost treasure is unendingly interesting.

A PALACE UNDER AN ABBEY UNDER A CITY

THERE is a block in Paris that a year ago was bought by certain rich men, and eventually is to have dormitory-buildings, very handsome ones, for the students of the near-by Sorbonne erected on its site. But in the meantime excavators, headed by men of scientific repute, are to demolish every foundation, tear each inch of masonry apart and dig down deep, foot after foot, into the recesses of the earth. There is splendid long-lost-sight-of treasure there, the rich men say; the treasure of Julian the Apostate, the great Roman emperor who made the first Paris—then called Lutetia.

It may be that of all the treasures ever thought of or imagined this is the greatest. There is even more than a possibility of its proving so. For where this block is, was the palace of Julian. Afterward, when Julian had been dead for centuries and was all but forgotten, the Abbey of Cluny was built on its ruins, and the palace's baths became the abbot's wine-cellar. To this palace the emperor had brought all his costly possessions gained by sacking the churches of Europe and levying on their communicants. He did this on such a colossal scale that history records his loot as incredible. No word can be found that any of these precious belongings have ever been removed.

One—just one—of the features of this treasure of the Emperor Julian is a set of twelve great statues, all in gold, of the Twelve Apostles, believed to be accurate portraits. They were made in Rome. Alone, these massive statues must be worth very nearly a king's ransom. And they but begin the almost unbelievably vast collection. Everything that was precious, in the churches or out of them, was fish that came to the Apostate Emperor's net. Over the country from Rome and all points in between came loads of sacred objects heavy with emeralds, rubies and diamonds, gold receptacles and vessels; jewels of every description and style of setting, provided only they were magnificent; uncut and unset stones; embroideries loaded with gold and gems, statues of alabaster and of ivory, silks, marbles, mosaics.

Human imagination finds it difficult to conceive of the treasures of these ancient monarchs. Fortunately there is an example that one may take as a comparison. It is known historically as the "Gothic Treasure," and gives something of an arithmetical idea of what a "kingly treasure" actually means. Dagobert, the Gothic king, received it as the dower of his bride, Placida, the daughter of the Emperor Theodosius. These are the "specifications:"

THE GOLD OF DAGOBERT

"FIFTY boys in silk bore each two platters full of gold coins; fifty girls in silk bore cups full of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, topazes. There were heaps of costly and curious ornaments, ropes of pearls, earrings, chains, sixty gold cups or chalices, fifteen patens for communion, twenty gold boxes to hold the Gospels and the famous missorium or banquet-dish, five hundred pounds of solid gold, jewel-studded. It had been given by Aetius the Patrician to Torimond, another Gothic chief, who actually got away with it later to Spain. There was also a large table, whose

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top was a single emerald, the wonder of the empire, circled with three rows of pearls and supported by three hundred and sixty-five legs of gold, jeweled everywhere, and estimated at one million pieces of gold coin."

In the light of such glories as these, the treasures of later days seem small and insignificant. The Julian-hidden baubles look promising. It seems a fair chance that they are there, in Paris's heart, as they were some fifteen hundred years ago.

Romance abounds in the story of the Emperor Julian. There are no more delightfully picturesque pages in history. It is strange to think that the site of his famous and great palace is definitely known, and that in all probability it is simply a matter of excavation for A. D. 1913 to get to A. D. 356, when Julian came to his palace in Lutetia—"his dear Lutetia," now Paris—and gathered there his wonder of wonders.

Listen to what Julian writes. He was killed in a campaign not long after this, and did not enjoy his treasures long:

"I am wintering in my dear Lutetia, in the beautiful little city of the Parisii, by its crystal river, whose waters make such an agreeable beverage. Winter is mild because of the nearness of the ocean. The vineyards produce a delicious wine that foams and sparkles. The women are renowned for their beauty and vivacity, and it is they who propose marriage to the men instead of being asked for. Betrothals take place at the feasts of the gods. The young girl fills her cup with wine, she drinks half and hands the remainder to the youth of her choice. And never has a bridegroom been known to refuse, such is the happy disposition of the Parisii."

The old Cluny Abbey stands on the remains of Julian's Palace. That is beyond dispute. Twenty feet below the city in this pile of buildings one finds himself amid Roman architecture. Experts have already determined what this is. It is the baths of Julian's palace, wonderful without compare. The Abbots of Cluny, to tell the story in full detail, kept the baths for their wine-cellar. Here a door led to the sweating-room, another to the bath-tubs. The abbots bricked them up. There are yet to be seen remains of the swimming-pool, and there are niches where patricians lay on couches. At one end, still deeper down, there have been cleaned out the Roman furnaces for heating water, just beneath the sweating-room, with a great system of terra-cotta pipes and heat-flues.

Could anything look more promising? It is believed, old Roman stories seem to prove it, that under all this masonry there are vast and splendid subterranean passages dug by Julian. He dreaded assassination, like every other famous Roman. So these great passages under ground were made, dug and vaulted under the palace to enable him to escape in the event of danger. Undermining the ground are corridors so large that two horsemen can gallop abreast in them. This is, at all events, the story. One is supposed to have led to the heathen temple.

Where is the treasure? Somewhere under the Abbey vaults. Somewhere in the vaulted passages a concealed door leads to the hidden chamber in which these wonders lie. It is down deep, deep, this loot of the churches and the rich Christians, snatched in the midst of the night of barbarism. The Palace of the Baths holds within its ruins the noblest secret of all.

NOTE—Remembering the many inquiries that still come in to us as a result of our series of articles on lost treasures a year or two ago, it is well to state here that no article of this kind can be taken as an infallible guide-book to great wealth. If lost treasures were so easy of recovery they would not long remain lost. All that an article of this kind can do is to collect from many sources whatever records, information and rumors have been handed down. In this particular case the treasures have been lost to man for centuries. The clues are necessarily slender. But the evidence indicates that these treasures do exist. Men have felt sufficiently sure of it to continue hunting for them during all these centuries. Now and then some one finds a lost treasure. We give the present data for what they may be worth. Inquiries should be addressed to the author in our care. Before long we will give you a new series of articles on lost treasure, with data drawn from all available sources, not only from books and records, but also from living men who have themselves hunted for lost treasures or have more or less knowledge concerning them.—THE EDITOR.

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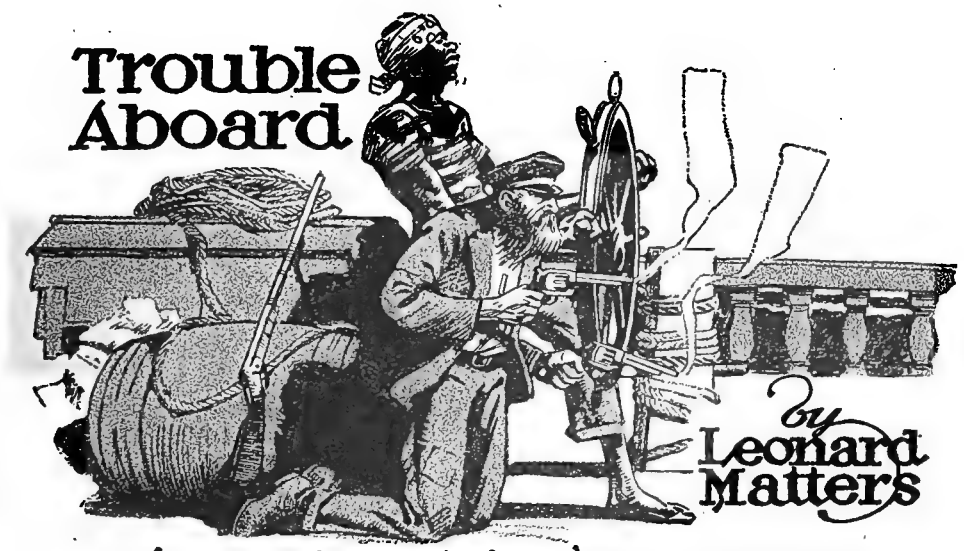

Trouble Aboard

by Leonard Matters

An Incident in the Career of "Black" Morton

EVERY stitch of canvas was on the schooner when the squall struck her. For days she had slugged sullenly through the Flores Sea with a whiff of a breeze on her quarter, a breeze that carried a musty smell of decaying island-vegetation with it, and occasionally bore on its light wings the overpowering scent of a hundred spices.

The *Harriet Constance* had dodged the first of the Autumn typhoons by retreating into Port Darwin, when Captain Morton had found that a hurricane in those parts had a bit more sting and persistence in it than was the case out in the Pacific. There a blow was a blow, sharp and vicious. But it came suddenly and, having up-ended or uprooted everything that stood in its path, it went howling on its way, as quickly as it had come. Here, nosing round the frayed end of Asia, Morton had found that a hurricane had different tricks, one being that it liked to hang about in the cramped seas, and could keep up a fight for days.

It came down like thunder from Tibet, was directed like water into a flume and roared in all its fury down the narrow pipe of sea that flowed between Singapore and Thursday Island. Sometimes, when it couldn't get out quickly enough by any of the side-entrances between the high-thrown mainlands of the greater archipelago, it halted for a "breather" at the end of Torres Straits, and went roaring back to Tibet.

For reasons that it is unnecessary to disclose in this story, Captain Theophilus Morton, better known among the coral seas as "Black" Morton, was shaping a course for Batavia; which, as every student of geography knows, is Dutch, hospitable, uninquisitive and the finest place in the five oceans to trade a cargo or sell a ship.

Another claim to distinction is that it is the capital of Java, and it maintains that dignity without the aid of any armed ship, or it did in the days of which I write. The cargo of the *Harriet Constance* was not large, if you except a couple of dozen feet of alligator with a flail-like tail at one end; a shifty eye and a long snout at the other. But nevertheless Morton had valuable trade for Batavia in the shape of pearls. He also had notions of losing his identity for a while, and exchanging his schooner for something bigger and less evilly known. There, you've got at those reasons after all! Let's get to the yarn about the squall; a sort of small brother to a hurricane.

Through the Banda Sea, fly-specked like a dirty window-pane with innumerable small islands, giving forth their "thousand stinks, and sundry stenches, each separate

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and distinct," Morton had brought his ship. Then the fever took hold of him. It was in the close and overladen air. The skipper had dosed himself with quinine and pain-killer, and for days lay a shivering and shaking mass of sweating humanity in the little cabin, while the *Harriet Constance* barely moved through the water. The mate, vigorous and voluble under the stimulus of the first bottle of a couple of cases of whisky he had surreptitiously hoisted aboard at Port Darwin and now dared to broach, packed every inch of rag on the sticks and kept it there, while the schooner slugged her way along under the Celebes.

Then he sat down to drink the remainder of the whisky, and curse the crew. He was hilariously, gloriously drunk, to the verge of bravery, when the squall loomed up in the westward. The native crew saw it, and stood anxiously gazing aloft or out to windward as the squall came flying along, broadening as it came. When Tutuila Tommy approached the mate and suggested taking in the topsails, and staysail, Hawke bellowed out an insult and flung an empty bottle at his head.

IT WAS at this juncture that Morton came weakly up the companionway, roused from his doze by the ominous moan of the impending squall, and alarmed for the safety of his ship by the darkened sky which presaged a wild blow. The fever had left him shaky and feeble, but one glance at the mate was sufficient to restore both his strength and nerve in the face of imminent danger.

Already the squall could be heard howling and roaring down on her prey. Already the schooner felt the first breath of it, and lay over till her lee rail threw a furrow of foaming water high in the air. The native at the wheel hung to the spokes and shrank from the blow that threatened the ship. Morton stepped out on the deck, unseen by the mate, but heralded by the terrified crew with a groan of relief.

Hawke sat in the waist of the ship, still shouting orders and insults. With one bound, Morton was at him.

"You drunken swine!" he cried as he picked the mate up by the neck; "you've lost a ship before to-day, this way, an' you're trying to lose mine! But you won't. Or, if you do, you'll be the first to drown, you dog!"

The skipper's free arm was drawn back as he roared at the rapidly sobering, cowering wretch, gripped as in a vice. With terrific force the enraged man shot out his big fist, which fell like a sledge on the besotted face that mutely gaped before Black Morton's wrath.

The mate fell in a heap, between a water-butt and a big coil of rope. There he lay, the blood gushing from beneath his face and trailing down the deck to the foam-washed scuppers. The crew were already running to their stations, without waiting for orders, when Morton turned from the mate.

"Down stays'l!" he yelled.

The hands had the halyards free. The sail came with a run as they tore at it, and fell half across the rail, its end mingling with the racing water.

"Jib tops'l haly'ds! Foresheet, an' leggo everything," thundered Morton, above the roar of wind and sea.

And, as if to beat the squall in the race for life or death, the skipper sprang himself to the sheet and tore at it.

Down swept the squall, striking the schooner a staggering blow before which she heeled. It was a matter of seconds only, but it seemed an eternity that she lay down to the blow. The agile native crew, however, tore the canvas off her while she took the green seas aboard.

Relieved of her head sails, the *Harriet Constance* came into the wind enough to ease the pressure, and at the same moment Morton let the foresail go with a rush, the boom smashing out to leeward. The halyards which had been released began to run, and while the storm howled and swept torrents of water on her, the stanch little vessel slowly righted herself.

Morton's hands were torn and bleeding; great beads of sweat stood out on his haggard face, and he shook like a reed, as he clung to the lee shrouds and gazed on the tangle of rope and sail that littered the schooner's deck. It was the hour of his greatest trial, and he was safe through it.

Had he lingered another second before coming on deck, nothing could have saved the ship. Dimly he realized that. Now he was speechless, dazed and quivering. Mutely he signed to the crew to lay hold of the sails and drag them from the water, and while the squall raged by, he hung to the shrouds. There in the waist, just where he had fallen, the mate lay unconscious of

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all that had transpired in that desperate few minutes. The crew worked the ship unguided by orders, unchecked by drunken abuse. Presently the squall was but a distant swirl of scud on the horizon. In its track the *Harriet Constance* lay, bedraggled but safe.

It was Tutuila Tommy who came to the skipper's aid, when the schooner rode comfortably in the sighing breeze that closed in on the gap torn in the atmosphere by the raging squall. From beneath the dingey-thwarts he pulled a case of whisky and, taking a bottle, knocked the head off it. The native poured a generous portion into the glass that still rolled unbroken in the scuppers, and took it to Morton.

"Boss," he said, "drink."

Morton took the liquor with trembling hand. Greedily he drank, and the big Samoan islander caught him as he let the glass shatter on the deck, and fell. They carried him below, and dropped him in his bunk, where he babbled and shrieked out the orders that had saved his vessel but a short time before. In the cabin the water that had found its way below swished and rushed in sympathy with every motion of the vessel. With a discipline born of careful training, the crew manned the pumps and got the water out. Then, under the direction of Tommy, they dragged the mate forward, and laid him on a mat, where he muttered in a drunken stupor that had succeeded the heavier sleep of unconsciousness.

Morton slept quietly after a time, and it was late at night before he awoke and gazed about him in the feeble light of the hanging lamp. Softly he called and, out of the half-light that streamed from the moonlit sky down the open hatchway, Tommy came to him.

"Give me a drink, Tommy, an' don't dope me like you did before, you guzzling heathen, or I'll straighten you up when I come to," Morton said with a playful glint in his brightening eye.

The native brought the bottle to him, and held the glass to the lamplight while he poured out the liquor. Morton tasted it, and then sipped slowly.

"What happened, Tommy?" asked Morton. "I don't quite get the performance yet. We're still afloat, an' I guess we ain't leakin' any, or I'd hear it here. Where's the mate?"

Over the whole scene of the morning, the suddenness of the squall, the mate's refusal to shorten sail, the skipper's own appearance on deck and his subsequent conduct and the disposal of Hawke's limp carcass, the native dwelt with Polynesian prolixity. When he described the mutterings of the mate, and the manner in which he still lay where he had been dragged, Morton's face darkened, and he struggled to sit up. The task was too great for his weakened frame, and he fell back.

"Never mind," he said, addressing no one in particular, but rather thinking aloud. "Guess I can wait. But it won't be long. Bill's been advertisin' for a take-down, an' by Himmel he's goin' to get it for sure. I got to manhandle that fellow some more, though I kinder figure even now he ain't goin' to be a cause for jealousy when we get back to Oulan among the ladies. Guess his face's got a heavy list to port as it is, jedgin' by the feel o' my knuckles. He won't monkey any with the crew I calk'late, an' he won't come near me unless he's got a gun I don't know anythin' about. But Yours Truly isn't exactly famous for 'lowin' a man the chance to slip one over on him if he's got any sort of notion that same is likely."

"Tommy," he said, addressing the native.

"Sir?"

"Guess you know who's skipper of this here packet?"

The Samoan grinned.

"Well, that's kind of you," added Morton. "Don't happen to fergit it, an' tell the rest of the boys a bad memory ain't goin' to be comfortable on this craft. You go straight up on deck, an' lay hands on that mate of mine. Wake or asleep, it don't matter. I want him down here where I can see him, an' I want him here within five minutes, with a lashin' on his legs an' another on his wrists. Guess I won't be fit to handle him free for a day or two, an' while I'm here I'll have the pleasure of seein' him an' lettin' him know what I think of his seamanship. Savee all that, Tommy?"

AGAIN the Samoan grinned, and grinning he retired to carry out the skipper's orders. A few minutes later the mate appeared, trussed like a chicken and borne between two of the crew. Tutuila, as master of ceremonies, walked

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alongside. Hawke was only dimly conscious of what was transpiring. Looking through what were little better than slits in his mashed and swollen face, upon which the blood from his wounds had congealed, he saw the drawn, sick face of Morton supported on a terrible hand, above the edge of the bunk, the skipper's eyes fastened on his mate.

"Put him down there, Tommy," said the skipper, indicating the other bunk, "an' unfurl him some. Jest keep the leg- an' hand-tackle taut."

The men dropped the mate on the bunk, and carried out Morton's instructions. Hawke merely rolled his eyes in their slits to take in the whole situation, shuddered violently, and wriggled until his face was turned from that of his skipper, who noted the feeble attempt of the distorted features to express the disgust their owner felt.

Morton gave some instructions to Tommy about the working of the ship, including an admonition to look out for further squalls, and then signaled that, for the present, they were not further wanted in the cabin.

The master of the *Harriet Constance* was panting for air when he had dismissed the Kanakas. The mate was already breathing heavily in the after-sleep of intoxication. Morton between his gasps for breath managed to utter, "I'll tell you—what—I'll do with—you—Bill Hawke, when I'm strong enough—to do it—an' you're sane enough—to know it. Now I guess—I'll sleep—you swizzling hog!"

And the big man fell back on his pillow, closed his eyes and dug his nails into the sides of the bunk as the last violent spasm of the fever racked his frame. The schooner softly drifted through the night under reefed mainsail and a pocket-handkerchief jib.

It was two days before the skipper managed to crawl on deck again. In those two days, he had ample opportunity to tell the mate just what he thought of his conduct in taking advantage of his skipper's illness to get drunk on liquor that had come aboard without Morton's knowledge, and while in that condition send the *Harriet Constance* as near to her doom as ever she had been.

The mate bore the abuse, heaped upon him in every moment of the skipper's waking-hours, with sullen fortitude; and Morton exhausted his strength, his vocabulary and his profound stock of metaphor upon Hawke. He even charged him with being that most pitiable of South Sea wasters—a man who got drunk on a single bottle. It was not till Morton stood unsteadily beside his bunk late on the second day, and shuffled his bare feet across the cabin-floor, that Hawke evinced the slightest interest in what was happening. The skipper towered above the miserable mate, who shrank with terror before the malignant gaze of the man who could be as cruel as an Indian.

"Well, Bill," said Morton, "guess the time has come to tell you what I'm goin' to do with you."

"I suppose you're goin' to kill me in some devilish way you been thinkin' out this last day or so?" snarled the mate.

"No, Bill. You ain't fit to die, an' you're too mean to shoot offhan'. I'm goin' to teach you somethin'. You're goin' to learn how precious drink of any sort is, an' get as near as you can to a knowledge of how uncomfortable it is to drown as you nearly drowned us all the other day. I'll go atten' to the business. You think out some way of bein' unhappy for a week or more." Morton turned away with a malicious grin and, yelling for Tommy, he was assisted by that worthy to reach the deck, leaving the mate to puzzle out what the skipper's words meant.

"The black murderin' devil!" said Hawke to himself. "It's no use fightin' him, I know; but while he's like this, I'd have a chance with him if I could get hold of a knife."

On deck, Morton sniffed at the spicy air, and cast a critical eye around his ship. The *Harriet Constance* had suffered very little in the squall that had nearly turned her turtle. Some of her rigging had been badly strained. Lashings and sheets had been hacked by the knives of the crew in the hurried effort to get the sails off her in time, and there were some other evidences of the narrow escape she had had. Morton nodded approvingly over the work done by the crew to get things shipshape.

Then he walked over to the water-barrel, which stood on the scene of the mate's downfall. He sounded it with his knuckles. It was almost empty. Closely he examined its staves, and was satisfied. He called for a hammer. The native carpenter brought

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it, and under the skipper's direction knocked out the end of the barrel.

"Now bring up the mate," he said. Two of the crew went below. While they were gone the big cask was emptied of its water, a new head was made for it and the bung removed.

"I'm goin' to put you under hatches for a time, you grog-guzzling son of a bargee," said Morton as the mate lay on the deck, wondering what was to be his fate. "You'll get your food an' drink in home'pat'ic doses in that barrel, Bill; an' you'll stay there till you're chastened in spirit an' as meek as a lamb. Unlash him, Tommy, an' in with him. He can stretch himself some, if he uses the space wisely."

THE lashings were removed from Hawke's wrists and ankles. Vainly he struggled in the grip of the natives. He spat, bit and writhed, but, cursing and foaming at the mouth, he was bundled into the cask. The new end was clapped on and, while Morton sat on it, the carpenter nailed it fast. The mate threatened all kinds of murder if once he got free.

Morton laughed hilariously over it all.

"Say, Bill," he cried at the bung-hole, "what a pot of money we'd make between us if we could dump you like this on the beach at Papeete and charge your lady friends there a shark's fin a peep. 'Real live specimen of a bucko mate. Only one in captivity!' " and, with a roar over his own wit, he went below to set a new course, leaving the mate to his musings and mutterings.

During that day and part of the next, Morton enjoyed life as he had never enjoyed it before. The *Harriet Constance* was simply wafted along past islands and islets gorgeous in their tropical adornments of rich scented trees and flowers. Island-scenery was no new sight to the skipper but, after his long bout of fever, and his confinement in the close cabin, he was in a mood to appreciate the beauties that were unfolded to his view.

The ship required practically no working. The glass was steady, and a cigar never smoked sweeter, nor a bottle of wine tasted better, than at this time. Morton loved to sit on the barrel with his heels drumming a merry tune on the staves. Occasionally he talked with his prisoner, and more than once in a burst of generosity he blew a puff of smoke through the bung-hole and professed a profound disgust at the mate's ingratitude over that kind attention. He had the hole enlarged so that he might see Hawke's face, and he kept up a running fire of comments when the cook shot a carefully selected diet through it to the famishing inmate of the unique cell, or tilted a bottle, about which the fumes of whisky still hung, so that the mate could get the last drop of the meager gill of water which was his stated allowance at stated intervals in the day.

As he had forecasted, Bill was in a properly chastened spirit, or a studiously politic frame of mind, after about thirty hours of this kind of treatment. He professed all kinds of remorse and penitence when Morton invited him to offer an opinion in calm language as to the heinousness of a mate's conduct when it took the form of getting drunk in the face of a squall, and carrying on sail against all the dictates of a skipper and the traditions of wise and strictly sober seamanship. He was even heard faintly to admit that being bottled up as he was, and fed sparingly on a strictly vegetarian diet when his stomach cried aloud for the food of a man, was a punishment that no reasonable being could honestly resent. He frankly admitted that the skipper who inflicted such a penalty for misdeeds so vile was actuated by the most worthy motives, principal of which was a laudable solicitude for the moral welfare of the culprit, and a generous desire to improve his seamanship.

"That being so," said Morton, "guess we can have the pleasure of your society again, Bill, an', as the wind's gone to glory an' there's nothin' for you to do, you can spend a couple of hours thinkin' how awkward it'll be for you if you fergit to hold the opinions you've expressed like a statesman."

Having relieved his mind of this final injunction, Morton called for the carpenter to remove the head of the cask. This done, the mate was dragged out, a crumpled-up, inert mass, and laid out on the deck under an awning to recover the use of his limbs.

"SAIL-HO!"

Morton rose from his seat by the mate's side and walked forward to where the man on watch stood pointing. Coming round the end of an island a few miles off, on the starboard bow, was a low-lying, Chinese-built junk, such as Morton

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had seen in the Straits. She was making slightly better pace than the *Harriet Constance*, because she was running before what breeze there was, and had the assistance of a quartet of sweeps on either side. At bow and stern she stood about as high out of the water as did the schooner, and she might have been engaged in any respectable trade, ranging from bêche-de-mer poaching to holding up ocean liners.

The skipper watched her round the sharp promontory, and saw her mat sails flap idly when she got in the shelter of the highland. Her sweeps also stopped working, and she lay motionless for a few minutes, while the schooner barely drifted on. Presently Morton made out on her decks a scene of bustle and excitement among the large crew she carried. More sweeps were being got out, and while the skipper was still puzzling over the character of the stranger she headed direct for his ship and was propelled rapidly toward the schooner.

"If a respectable South Sea trader mistook that ark for a piratical junk," said Morton, "reckon he wouldn't be held responsible for the mistake, or the consequent damage. Get the stays'l on her, an' send up the tops'ls, an' everything else we've got that'll hold wind," he added, addressing the crew generally. "Don't waste time, either. We'll have some better breeze than this along presently, an' by the looks of things we'll want it. That duck's lookin' for trouble—an' he'll get it, before I've done with him! But it'll be a case of fleeing from the wrath to come if there's more of his kind about. Bill!" Morton had approached the mate, who was sitting up and rubbing himself. "Bill!" he repeated, "rouse yourself, man. There's going to be a better riot on this old hooker than ever you've seen before. What do you make of that?"

The mate rose slowly and gazed long on the junk, which was now scarcely a mile away.

"That lot's a pirate, manned by Malays, an' commanded by Chows," he said. "I've seen 'em before in the China seas, an' a bloodier lot of murderers don't exist. You're up against it, Cap'n; we all are. You can't run, and we ain't enough to fight."

"You're wrong again, Bill. The only time you can see any hope in anythin' is when you're drunk, and then you'll believe a ship can carry stuns'ls in a squall an' keep right side up. We'll fight first and run after; an' that bunch will be real sorry to see us go, believe me. We'll turn —— loose among 'em," and Morton smote the rail with his fist.

The schooner was crawling at a snail's pace through the water, despite her topsails, which filled fairly well to the light breeze that scarcely touched her lower canvas. The junk rode lightly on the water and, driven by her powerful sweeps, rapidly overhauled the other ship. Morton anticipated that the men on the junk would try to run her alongside, seeing that the water was calm, and she had the easy steerageway her motive-power gave her. He laid his plans accordingly to give the pirates the hottest reception they had ever had from a ship that carried no guns.

His first move was to get a tackle on the alligator's cage and hoist it till the fore end rested on the schooner's rail, and the stern end was heaved up at such an angle as to send the brute's snout hard against the door of the long crate.

"They'll get that, when we're ready," said Morton, "and if that beast ain't worth a couple of dozen armed men to us, tell me I don't know anythin'. There was more to it than ever I thought, when I accepted a charter from old Louey Yick back there in Port Darwin to ship that brute to China for him, and got six hundred dollars for the job. You know this reptile's ways, Bill, an' what's more, there ought to be a fellow feeling about the business of turning him loose. Now don't look so sore about it. You're going to take charge of this part of the performance, an' don't fire him out before I tell you. If you do, I won't trouble to shoot you myself, because I guess you know that job 'll be attended to by that bunch of excited heathens. Any one might think we're gettin' away from 'em, the way they're yellin'."

All the available stock of arms, knives and hatchets had been served out by this time. The crew of the *Harriet Constance* were prone on the deck, in accordance with Morton's orders, to avoid the bullets of the pirates. So far there had been not a single shot from the junk, but she was near enough for the skipper to see, in the hands of her half-naked crew, some antiquated Sniders and condemned Martinis, sold by a paternal British Government to fervidly

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loyal British dealers, and by them sold to the scum and riffraff of the Orient. This free and easy trafficking in discarded arms made life in sundry uncivilized parts highly interesting. The contractors traded the weapons off to professional gun-runners, who could not appear as principals before the Government. The gun-runners turned them over to the pirates of the Persian Gulf, the Yellow Sea or Penang. The pirates used them on peaceful traders, and the British Government got them back, by sending its navy after the pirates when they got too impudent, and forgot the source of their strength, as they did when they held up a British vessel.

Morton stood on the after deck, beside the steersman. In either pocket of his coat lay a revolver of heavy caliber and deadly accuracy. Close handy, its barrel resting against the binnacle, stood his rifle. Under the bulwarks lay a long-handled ax. In the waist, the mate was crouched by the cage containing the alligator. The hinged door of the cage was held back by a boat-hook, which at the word of command would be removed, and the savage reptile forced by his own weight to slide forward. On the fore deck, Tutuila Tommy and others of the native crew, armed in all manner of ways, kept under cover and awaited developments.

THEY were not long in coming. The junk was within a hundred yards when Morton started operations with his rifle. The first shot bowled over the helmsman of the pirate. The second stirred up the crowded deck, and brought a hail-storm of lead whistling through the schooner's rigging, or "spatting" into her timbers. Morton whispered to the man at the wheel. The schooner's head fell away, and the grapples thrown from the junk splashed in the water.

"Let 'em have it!" yelled the skipper, and every shot from the *Harriet Constance* evoked a yell of pain. The Malays were poor marksmen under the best of conditions. But the almost entire absence of a human target on the schooner's decks, after the first shot had come from her, and the helmsman had dropped in obedience to his skipper's orders, left them nothing definite to shoot at.

While they plied their sweeps and raced after the ship again, their riflemen kept up a wild and random fire that did no harm. Once more they hove alongside.

Once more Morton disposed of the man hanging to the long tiller on the raised poop of the junk. Again they sought to grapple the fore-rail of the schooner. Morton's islanders chopped through their ropes, and the schooner's head easily widened the breach between the two vessels, the junk jammed hard aport by the weight of a dead Malay of gigantic size, who hung limply over the tiller.

The schooner's skipper saw the pirates clear their dislocated steering-gear, and he gave them a lively few seconds with his revolvers while they did it. In return, the pirates directed the whole of their fire on the stern of the *Harriet Constance*, while they lashed their tiller dead amidships, and paddled on after the schooner. Morton heard his own steersman shriek as an ounce of lead struck him between the shoulders, and he sank to the deck, coughing blood from his punctured lungs. Prone on his belly, the resourceful American propelled himself to the wheel-post, and grabbed the spokes from below, shouting at the same time,

"Stand by, Bill! We've got to take 'em aboard. Leggo when I yell, an' don't mull things. Then join me aft."

The pirates were steering the junk by her sweeps now. A few powerful strokes and she was nose for nose with the schooner and not thirty feet apart. Slightly ahead she ran. There was a chorus of yells to the rowers, and the port sweeps were pulled in board. At the same moment Morton threw the schooner's head up to the wind, and the two ships crashed alongside, the junk's grapples falling on the schooner's forecastle-head at the instant of impact.

"Now, Bill!" trumpeted the skipper above the scream of voices that rose from the junk's decks.

The mate was thrilling for the order. With one tug he tore down the door of the cage, pulled away the boat-hook and drove it half-way through a Malay who, kris in hand, was springing over the rail.

The alligator hung for a second to the floor of his cage, his sharp claws sunk in the boards. Then he pitched outward and downward to the junk's deck, smashing a gap through the naked black horde that scrambled together for the leap upon the schooner's rail.

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In an instant there was a wild medley of cries; gnashing, snapping jaws and a crashing of bodies as the big brute lashed his armored tail right and left, and tore about the crowded deck of the junk.

Both fore and aft the pirates sprang from their raised decks on to the schooner. It was no time for rifles, and they came in their lust for blood and plunder, armed with knives and krises.

Morton met them aft, with a revolver in each hand. He had reloaded as he lay on the deck. Now he stood a terrible figure, facing alone the wild rush of Oriental fatalists.

When his guns spoke, a man fell. When they were silent, he seized the ax and lopped off hands and arms, or smashed skulls like egg-shells.

He was in his element. He said afterward it was like the good old days among the islands when the prelude to a landing was just such a fight with the cannibals. How long the fight raged, he never knew. Despite his terrific strength and the death he dealt out before and on either side of him, he was hard-pressed when the mate came running aft to his assistance. Using the boat-hook like a boarding-pike, Hawke stood out of the swing of the skipper's ax and was just in time to beat back those who had climbed aboard lower down the ship's side, and were working round to the back of the skipper.

Together they cleared the after deck of attackers. Together they stood as they had in many a similar fight, and swept the rail of a dozen brown hands that still desperately strove to hoist their lithe bodies on the schooner. The junk's decks were a scene of wild confusion and slaughter. Morton and the mate had accounted for many of the pirates on the poop. Amidships, half the Malays were engaged in a sanguinary contest with the terrible beast that had been shot in among them. There was no chance of an attack on the schooner from that quarter, while the alligator plunged about in the confined space from which the attack must be launched.

Every sweep of the brute's tail laid out a man with a broken leg or a cracked head. The Malays struck blindly at it with knife and kris. They even pierced it, with the force and persistence of their blows, but nothing save a carefully directed shot could have stilled the agile, deadly reptile. In the wild mêlée that raged no one was sane enough to aim such a shot.

MORTON watched the scene an instant and, leaving the mate to hold the after deck where the battle had been won, he dashed forward, loading a revolver as he ran, to join his crew in the fray.

He was just in time. The sturdy islanders had stood their ground well before the rush of the Malays in their quarter. Tutuila Tommy's face was laid open by the slash of a kris, and a knife thrown as only a Malay knows how to throw a knife hung from the shoulder of another man. All of them were cut and bleeding, staggering and slipping on the bloody boards. The press of numbers was forcing them back when Morton came on the scene, and fresh lines had been brought aboard to hold the schooner's head fast to the junk.

The skipper emptied his revolver into the midst of the pirates and, tearing an ax from the hands of one of the crew, he dashed forward, smiting right and left at brown bodies which assailed him. His men followed close on his heels, and beat down their assailants with a fury engendered by his electrical presence.

Morton fought his way to the rail, chopped through the ropes and, grabbing up a capstan-bar, threw his weight into the effort to push the schooner's head clear of the junk's prow, at the same time shouting an order to the mate, who sprang to the wheel.

The fight was won. In a second the two vessels were ten feet apart, and drifted rapidly out of jumping-distance. With the alligator still vigorous and dangerous on the main deck of the junk, the pirates had no chance to use their sweeps to get to close action again, even if they had not had a stomachful of the fight that the schooner's complement had put up.

"That'll do," Morton cried gleefully. "They've learned their lesson! Guess they don't want any more, an' here comes a breeze. Close-an'-by," he called to the mate.

"Close-an'-by it is," came the answer from the wheel.

"Flatten head-sheets."

The Kanakas hauled on the ropes, and the *Harriet Constance*, taking the gentle puff, heeled slightly, gathered way and ran across the prow of the junk at no greater distance than a score of feet. There was a

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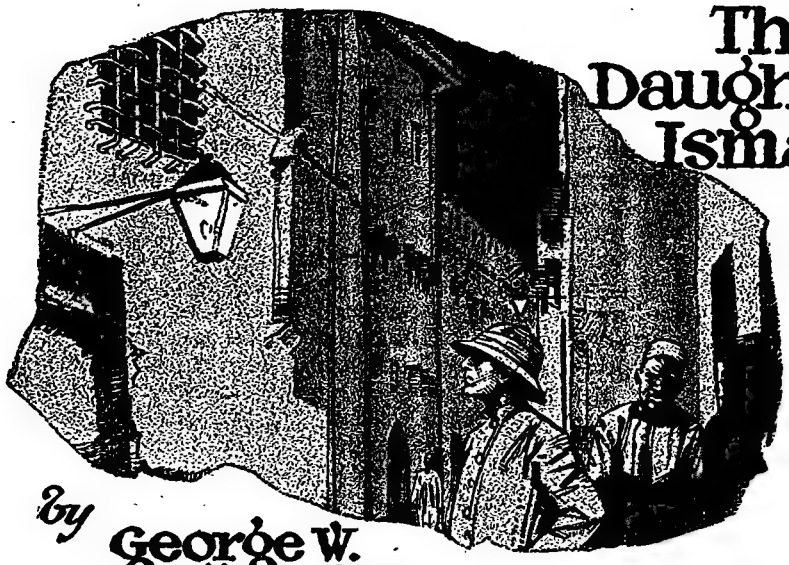
wild howl of rage from the Malays, followed by a few shots. But the freshening wind carried the schooner quickly out of range. Morton walked aft, picked up the dead body of the native helmsman, which still lay where it had fallen, and dropped it gently overboard. On the fore deck the Kanakas did the same with dead and wounded pirates.

"Keep her on this course for a bit," the skipper said to Hawke. "I told you, Bill," he added, "we'd fight first an' run after, an' that bunch would be real sorry to see us go. Maybe you'll say they ain't, eh? Well, maybe not, but I figure there's one of our crew whose company they won't get rid of for some time, and they wish to the Lord we'd come back for. I'll send you up a taste of somethin' good, Bill. Guess if this breeze holds, we'll make Batavia inside of a week."

"Aye!" said Bill cheerfully.



The Daughter of Ismalji

by George W. Sutton, Jr.

An' I seed her fust a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot.

—Kipling.

"ALLAH *hu ackbar, Ashadu an la illaha.*"

The muezzin's throaty call, commanding the faithful to save their immortal souls or suffer the mortal consequences, thundered forth from the minaret, paused for a moment in the motionless parched air and then reverberated in booming sound-waves down the narrow worn streets until, softened by distance, it reached the ears of the waiting throng in the square before the palace. An instant later the dying echoes were shattered and split by the crash of the Mohammedan gun, and five thousand hysterical voices uttered shrill cries of religious fervor as ten thousand eyes, turned upward, beheld for the first time the barely discernible crescent of the new September moon. It was the beginning of El Haji; the celebration of the end of the long fast of Ramazan.

Over beyond the multitude, a gaunt, black-bearded, white-robed priest, muttering guttural invocations, plunged his knife into the throat of a bullock. As the warm blood dripped over the sea-wall into the Indian Ocean, the crowd broke into a chant, which gradually became a long-drawn-out wail.

Ray Bartlett, returning from a visit at the house of the new American consul,

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gently placed his foot in the middle of his Masai "boy's" back. The rickshaw came to a sudden stop.

Ray leaned back, tipped the sun-helmet away from his eyes and gazed listlessly at the varicolored scene. It was no new story to him. He had seen many such celebrations since a misguided Fate had dropped him off in Zanzibar, three years before. Three years he had spent on a stupid little island in the middle of a red-hot sea, with no American friends, no American amusements, no American girls. A smelly little island, romantic in sound but dirty and dull in reality. Times without number he had compared it with another island, called Manhattan, not so large, but abounding in theaters, taxicabs, tea-rooms and girls—an island whence he had been tempted by a yearning for the Great Unknown and three thousand a year as overseer-agent for Crosby-Cratlin Company, traders and constructors. And all these celebrations reminded him, by their very differentness, of still another island, by name Coney, and that made him more homesick than ever.

He closed his eyes, tightly, one at a time, and then opened them and repeated the operation. This relieved the eye-strain caused by the glare of the sun on the white coral roads.

"*Nenda,*" he muttered, to the sweating rickshaw-boy, and the flimsy vehicle moved forward in the direction of his house in the Malindi section. Ray looked at the watch on his wrist, rubbed his face with a silk handkerchief which he took from his sleeve and extracted a large cream-colored pill from a box in the pocket of his white duck coat. These actions he performed with the ease of long usage, but the hand that raised the pill to his lips trembled. The fever-mosquitoes had bitten him not once but many times.

A few minutes later some Swahili "boys," lounging in the lower hall, stood up and saluted as he jumped lightly from the rickshaw to his door-step and passed up-stairs to the broad veranda running around the inside court.

It lacked a couple of hours of dinner-time. He threw off his coat, settled himself in a long-chair and made an ineffectual effort to interest himself in a week-old copy of the *East African Standard*. Presently, his boy, a Nubian, knowing his master's moods, brought him a clinking whisky and soda, which Bartlett sipped with satisfaction. Drops of perspiration coursed down his back in shivery jerks. Mechanically he stretched out each foot in turn, while the silent black man untied his boot-laces and put the house-slippers on his feet. Then, clasping his hands behind his head, Ray lost himself in a labyrinth of speculation. On the wall a flesh-colored lizard was catching mosquitoes and flying-ants.

Who was she? What corner in this flea-bitten city harbored such a glorious Indian flower? Why had she been snatched away from him by the little old man with the vindictive eyes—probably her father—just after Ray had, at the risk of being kicked precipitantly into the presence of his Maker, plucked her from the path of the infuriated camel? He called his boy.

"Abedi, tell me why Indian girls no can speak *burre* (freely) with white men."

"*Dasturi, Bwana,*" replied the Nubian, in Swahili.

Yes, that was it; *dasturi*, custom, tradition. That was the key-note of the Orient, the password of all these Eastern races. But in this particular case it was a blooming inconvenient *dasturi*. It stood in the way of the only possible bit of romance Ray Bartlett had been able to unearth for three years.

At home, his natural attractions had helped to surround him with the very atmosphere of romance. Women and girls, especially girls of the débutante age, liked him, as they are bound to like any clean young man of good family, athletic modeling and sunshiny personality, who openly adores them as the most awe-inspiring of God's creations. In Zanzibar he had lived, until to-day, on the memory of moonlight nights at home.

He might ask his *jemadar* to trace her for him. But if the *jemadar* found her, what then? Her father was a Banyani. Possibly he was rich, for her flowing breeches and head-shawl were of filmy silk, green and pink respectively, her little waistcoat was of hand-embroidered yellow velvet and her bare baby-sized feet were encumbered by huge knobby silver anklets. Ray remembered her feet. They were the cunningest feet he had ever seen, with diminutive red crescents stained upon the shining nails.

In the rush for her life he had stepped upon one of them. He wanted to apologize for that. But how? She was probably

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sequestered in a room, high up, with barred windows, where her father kept her as jealously as he kept his elusive rupees. It was the *dasturi*.

And as he pondered, Ray Bartlett had to realize that the *dasturi* was a good one. The white man of the East is not always a scrupulous gentleman. Few morals seep through the gateway of the Red Sea. They are, many times, discarded along with the northern manner of dress, somewhere up around Port Said. Much can be blamed on the climate.

Well, a white man's a white man and an Indian's an Indian and it could never amount to much, anyway. Besides, it was about time for him to be shifted back to New York. But she was so soft and yielding. And when she had looked up from his arms with those sloe-black eyes and whispered, "Oh, *Bwana*," there was a sententious depth in her inflection that interested him mightily.

THE memory of youth is ephemeral. A couple of Childs cocktails with Captain Bardie, the Port-Officer, who dropped in for pot-luck, served to drive everything from Ray's mind but a receptiveness for Bardie's reminiscences. For twenty-two years the Captain had wandered up and down the East African coast, from one Government post to another. Ugly insinuations concerning him, in which the words "smuggling" and "slave-trading" predominated, were whispered around the card-tables at the English Club. His balance in the National Bank of India ran well into the lacs. But he was an efficient officer and the Colonial Government asked no questions.

"I tell you, Bartlett," he said, after dinner, between sips of thick Turkish coffee, "these bally Orientals—I mean to say—know more in half a minute than we, with all our civilization, will ever know. They don't talk—I mean to say—as much and they don't do as much, but they think deeper. And their institutions are more lasting. You know, I'm a Buddhist—not a blanked good one, I'll admit—but I fancy they're nearer to the Answer than any one else. Life is nothing—illusion; Death," and he spread his hands, "is Nirvana and annihilation. But these Mohammedans and Brahman chaps—I mean to say—they're different. They're fighters. Some day they'll jolly well wipe us out. But they're in no hurry about it. They have no sort of use for us. Think we're a gang of rotters. Jolly well right in most cases, too. After our civilization is forgotten—I mean to say—like Egypt and Greece and Rome, you'll find the Arab and the Indian bowling about in the same old way, just as they were five hundred years B. C., eating the same curry and beans and dried shark, following the same *dasturis*."

"Yes," said Ray. "Their *dasturis* are a nuisance, specially the one that keeps their girls locked up."

Captain Bardie knocked the ash off his black Manila cigar and gazed at him curiously.

"Keep away, young man, keep away. That's sudden death."

He rose and meditatively walked the length of the dining-room and back, pausing beside Bartlett's chair.

"See that scar?" He pointed to his forehead. "The *dasturi* did that in——"

Suddenly the air was rent by the popping of millions of firecrackers and all over the city the throbbing sound of tom-toms welled into a pulsating vibration. The night celebration had commenced.

"I'll tell you about it some day," said Bardie. "Come, we must do the rounds."

Out in the six-foot streets, Ray found it hard work to keep close to the Captain. Arduously they wormed a course through the hilarious crowds. The gods had been propitiated. Life was to resume its pleasant aspect, and everybody was noisily happy. In the tortuous snake-path known as Ouka Street, the press was thickest. Here the merchants were holding open house. The air was full of exploding firecrackers; some small and sizzling, some large and powerful; all dripping sparks of living fire on bare backs and cheap cotton print. But of what moment were a few burns to a believer? Not that much, sahib!

It was utterly impossible to keep track of one's companion for long, and Ray soon found himself alone in a swarm of screaming natives. He pushed on to pay his salaams to Ali Viseram, the clove-agent, and some of the other shopkeepers he knew.

In each place the procedure was identical. He shouted "*Hodi*" as he surmounted the stone step; he was answered "*Karibu*." He wished the merchant health and prosperity, especially prosperity. He wished

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the same for the merchant's uncles, cousins, brothers and nephews. He was forced to chew tasteless betel-nut; he was sprinkled with different musky perfumes until his coat, by its aroma, suggested a *dorien*, and, as he was leaving, his arms were filled with firecrackers, which he was *dasturi*-bound to set off on the door-step.

After a while the din began to affect his fever-shaken nerves, and a warm damp breath from the shore warned him to get in out of the night air. Seeking a short cut to his house he presently came to an almost deserted section of the town. Here and there, sleeping in the roadway, a Somali lay swathed, head and all, in the dirty white sheet which in the daytime served as his only garment.

It was a mean section, inhabited by a poorer class, the *fundis*, the vendors and smaller merchants. The rancid smell of copra made the air bitter to the taste. Ray was tired. He was bored. His mind was a blank. He looked up at the stars. The Southern Cross stood above him. He wished he might change it to the Great Dipper.

"BWANA!"

From the limpid darkness the word seemed to be whispered in his very ear. Instantly he came to a stop, his every sense alert. A pariah dog dragged its bloated form to a softer resting-place. Nothing else stirred in the street. Not a light shone from any of the houses. But a flutter of sound at a window, a quick step and he had found her.

She was crouching low behind the iron bars. As Ray came close to the window she laughed, in a tremulous little crescendo.

"Can the *bwana* climb?" she asked, in sibilant whispers.

Most assuredly the *bwana* could climb.

"*Jambo, bibi. Hali gani?* Climb what?" he inquired.

There was no answer.

"Climb where, *bibi?*"

Again the silence greeted him. She had left the window. He gazed up at the house. It was a two-story box-like affair, made of coral, and the front wall, broken at regular intervals by barred windows, was smooth and sheer, to be scaled only by lizards and other cup-footed things. Ray hesitated, then quietly walked around the corner.

The street in back was the boundary of the Swahili village, Ngambo. Ray picked his way cautiously between two mud-walled huts, from one of which came the sound of a voice asking for water, and found himself standing by a low shed whose corrugated sheet-iron roof sloped gently up from the level of his shoulders until it met the coral walls of the house at the rear. About seven feet above the roof a black square indicated a window, without bars, and Ray knew then where he was to climb.

As he sat down on the ground to remove his white canvas shoes the tom-toms were beating a dull rhythm over by Shanganl, and the yells of the frenzied dancers reached him in weird, muffled echoes. He stood up, listening. A parrot, awakened by its parasites, screamed in a palm-tree. Over near the Sultan's stables a donkey brayed raucously. Everything near was still. The dripping night gave forth not a whisper.

Ray carefully lifted himself to the top of the shed. His heart-beats quickened as he crossed the roof. Once the sheet-iron emitted a sharp screech as it bent under his weight, and the drops of dampness oozed coldly through the bottoms of his silk socks. With muscular arms he raised himself to the sill and disappeared into the black orifice.

There was dead silence in the room. At first his eyes could distinguish nothing. The sick-sweet perfume of musk mingled with the stinging fumes of Swahili tobacco.

"The *bwana* is brave."

She was lying on a silk-covered mat on the floor, her head pillowed on one raised hand, smoking a native *mpili* rolled in leaves.

"Yes, the young *bwana* is entirely brave," she said, in an undertone, laughing musically.

Ray stretched his six feet of length on the floor near her.

"No," he said, in mellifluous Swahili, "not brave. But he loves beautiful girls."

"Oh! All beautiful girls?"

"Yes; some more than others."

"Then the brave *bwana* is not the kind that loves *one* girl?"

"Oh, yes, the *bwana* should be pleased to love one girl alone."

There was a pause.

"The *bwana* is brave. Most men have the hearts of fishes. What name is yours?"

"Ray."

"*Bassi?*"

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"No, Raymond Nichols Bartlett. I am known as Ray."

"*Bwana* Ray."

"Don't say *Bwana* Ray. That means master. Say Ray."

"Ray." The name rolled mellowly from her tongue. "I am Jumara Ismalji."

"Well, Jumara, you're a wonder!"

It was delightful, flirting with this child. For to the young American that is all it was, a flirtation; one of many. And she was so trusting, so confiding, and she devoured his words with such apparent awe that it would have seemed ridiculous to credit her with a woman's mind and heart. She was the first girl he had spoken with in many months. He lay on his back on the stone floor beside her, staring up at the black ceiling, and in answer to her naive questions he told her of his life at home, a subject he was nothing loath to discuss; of the dances, the theaters, the yachting. She asked timidly about his sisters and their life. She was amazed at the freedom of it.

Of herself she told him very little; indeed there was not much to tell. She was eighteen. She was hedged about by the dictates of caste. Her father owned three dhows that brought bags of rice and "Bombay Duck" over from Colombo. One had lately fallen to pieces on some rocks; much money loss had been occasioned thereby, and her father's temper in consequence had deteriorated. All her life she had been shut up, but she had a general knowledge of men through books.

Oh, yes, undoubtedly she would be married to somebody or other as soon as her father could afford it, unless—well, unless—did not some girl at home write letters that caused the *bwana* to race down to the steamer-landing when the "sighted" horn blew? No? Good!

And above all things she idolized and idealized his bravery, his fearlessness. To her, his very presence in her house suggested a daring that was highly flattering.

The deadly risk of their clandestine meeting seemed very far away, to him at least. The conversation was so innocent and the atmosphere so peaceful that the thought of death, lurking in the silent shadows, was too repugnant to be entertained. Suddenly it was brought to mind. The chain jangled on the studded door below. The massive hinges creaked. A whispered word, a handclasp in the dark and the girl was alone.

THE next morning Ray went down to the custom-house to bid on a shipment of ivory which had arrived the day before. Shouting Masai boys were pulling *homali* carts, laden with cloves, from the go-downs to the scales. Half-naked Arabs were running about with *makandas* of chilis on their shoulders, and here and there a European trader was dickering with a Parsee merchant over the price of a lot of copra. On the earthen floor of the storeroom the yellow tusks were laid out in rows. Mohammed Swedi, Crosby-Cratlin's venerable expert, expatiated on the shipment.

"He *calasia*," he pointed with gnarled hand; "he entirely good. He prime, mostly *gendai*, *ndui;* he not such good but good *kidogo*. You buy all him *calasia*. Some him prime if not too *ghali*."

But Ray had little heart for business. Prime ivory brought to mind bangles; bangles reminded him of Indian girls, soft-voiced and alluring.

That night, very late, he again sought his way between the mud-walled huts of the Swahili village. And for many nights after.

One morning he awoke to the uncomfortable realization that the girl loved him. And, summing up, he knew, also, that there was a scar on his own heart. It had been a wonderful night. He had seen her! Since their meetings began he had talked to a shadow and had been answered by a voice from the dark.

Last night he had seen her! She was alone in the house; she had led him to a front room. There, while he remained in darkness, she had stood by the window and the glorious tropical moonbeams had poured in over her wondrous features and her lovely silk-clad form. She was twenty times, no, a hundred times more beautiful than he had thought when he had swept her from under the feet of the camel. She was entrancing. And he had taken her in his arms and kissed her. It was the first time she had been kissed. The effect was electrical.

She had clung to him, ferociously, weeping. She had begged and demanded him to take her away, away to America, where all men were brave; beyond the *dasturi*, beyond caste; there to be his princess or his slave, whichever he wished, a thing to be loved as an equal or trodden under foot as

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something unworthy. And finally she had plucked a gleaming knife from her girdle and threatened to kill herself if he deserted her, now or ever. For answer Ray had kissed her and—promised.

Yes, he realized with a groan, he had promised. And he could never make good. He was intoxicated with her beauty, but the thing was impracticable. And the more he thought of it, the more impracticable it became. What place was there for her in the whirling scheme of things at home?

At breakfast his boy brought him a cablegram from New York. Ray tore open the envelope and spread the message out beside his plate. It was in the company's private code:

Shininess Crossways Mombasa.

GRUMBLING.

Abedi fetched the key-book and the cablegram resolved itself into:

Take next steamer home. Substitute arrives next steamer from Mombasa.

CROSBY-CRATLIN-CO.

Here was what he had prayed for for two years! But its arrival brought no joy. It did bring, however, a possible solution of his problem. His work in Zanzibar was finished, for several years at least. Stebbins would arrive on the *Burgermeister* from Mombasa that afternoon. His ship, the *Admiral*, would steam up from the south and leave the next morning. He would simply go home and forget.

He began his packing. One trunk was reserved for the *kibokos*, the prayer-mats, the brass bowls, the leopard-skins—the souvenirs of the past three years. How trivial they became in the light of bigger things that occupied him. What would the company—what would his family say if he arrived home with—— No, it could not be.

There would be heartburnings, fierce, irresistible. He hoped she would do nothing—foolish. But he must leave her. He must never see her again.

Stebbins arrived. That night Ray went to bed at nine o'clock. His romance, so far as he was concerned, was over. It had to be over. It needed only time, now, to efface her image from his heart. A good night's sleep followed by a busy morning would tend to keep his mind in order until he was well out to sea. He snapped out the light and turned his face to the wall.

THREE hours later he was climbing the wet sheet-iron roof of the shed. He had struggled with himself and lost. And, as he climbed, the shadows in back of him moved and a dark figure hurried around the corner. She was waiting for him. As Ray folded her in his arms he had not the heart to tell her what he had come to tell her—what, he persuaded himself, was his only object in coming to her.

Jumara was in raptures of happiness. The future was full of brightness; no cloud marred the vista. She nestled in his arms with her little head resting on his breast, and for a long time no word was spoken. Suddenly, without warning, she darted from him, across the room. There was a stealthy sound at the side. A door opened swiftly and the room was flooded with light.

With quick motions Jumara's father set the kerosene-lamp on the table by the door and wheeled to face the American. He was old and feeble, but he was terribly in earnest, and the knife in his hand was long and keen.

"So, sneaking dog, you come like a black thief to ravish my home? Unbelieving pig, you would make sport of my priceless possessions! Your life is mean pay for such privilege! Would that I might take also your soul! But great Brahm has already done that. To me is only left to drive this knife into your evil body; to plunge you into that future where you will be a spider, an ant, a rat, something to carry plague, to be spat upon."

Ray's first thought was of the pistol in his pocket. He dismissed it.

"Keep away, young man, keep away. That's sudden death!" Bardie's words came back to him. Maybe it was sudden death under some circumstances. But with his strength, and towering, as he did, over the old man like a Colossus, the remembered admonition conveyed no sense of personal danger.

The situation, though tense, was not difficult of solution—a quick leap to the roof, to be swallowed up in the darkness; or one crashing blow and the old man senseless at his feet. In either case, the incident would be closed, so far as he was concerned, for to-morrow Zanzibar and the *dasturi* of the

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East would be but a memory. Ah, yes, an easy solution for *him*, but the girl—his wonderful Indian rose, standing by him now straight as a rod, watching him proudly, expectantly—what of her? A quick leap to the roof and away—yes—never to return. But Jumara? To leave her to the vengeance of the *dasturi?* The answer came like an echo. NO!

Ray looked at the girl. Her silk shawl was thrown back. She was smiling at him. Then and there the realization surged over him that he loved her, that he wanted her, that he could not leave her. And with the realization came a glimmering idea of a plan of deliverance.

The old man was approaching, bent on destruction.

"Wait!" said Ray, suddenly, as if afraid.

The Banyani paused with uplifted knife.

"I meant no harm," said Ray. "I saw your daughter from the street. She was beautiful. I climbed—even up here. But she repulsed me. She would have nought of me. I would have gone."

"Liar!" screamed the old man. "Liar—*uwongu!* I saw you climb. She awaited you." He faced the girl. "Since when has the daughter of Cowasji Ismalji, descendant of a thousand holy men, become a woman of the bazaars? Didst think to escape my vengeance? I am not unknown in the city, and many would do my bidding. But of you later. First comes the death of your infidel lover."

He turned toward Ray. It was too late. With the quickness born of college-athletics, the American seized him and with powerful muscles bent back his wrist until the weak fingers relaxed and the knife dropped with a soft "pung" on the silken rug. It was an unequal struggle. The aged man, desperate and vengeful, kicked and writhed to no purpose. Swiftly and silently Ray gagged him with a handkerchief, using his own belt and necktie to bind his feet and hands. It was over soon and the Banyani lay moaning in a corner, helpless, with his daughter and the white man gazing down at him.

Ray blew out the light and went to the window. Presently the girl joined him. And Ray never knew that in the darkness she had bent over the old man and, with a sob, clasped him to her breast.

There was danger. The step had been taken and pursuit was certain.

So Ray hurried the girl through the dim narrow streets, not to Malindi, not to his house; but to Shangani, where lay the house of Marshall, American consul.

HALF an hour later an innocent Cutch man, who, worn by a day of labor, had cast himself down to sleep on the door-step of a rich trading-company in the Malindi district, was frightened nearly into the Hereafter. He awoke to find a hatless young American sahib, accompanied by two *askaris*, or near-soldiers, shaking him and ordering him hence at the point of a shining pistol.

Ray sat all night in a protected corner of his room, overlooking the inside court, and thanked God for the Eastern custom of architecture that demands barred windows. A shotgun lay across his knees. Outside one *askari* spent the time till daylight in walking around and around the house while the other was kept busy interviewing an unusual number of messengers, of greasy aspect and glittering eyes, who smilingly explained that they simply must see the young sahib on a matter of utmost importance, and please open the big brass-studded door.

An old man, raving of a lost daughter, caused much trouble. He was finally repulsed. He would not go away, however, but sat through the night on the steps of the mosque opposite. And it was noticed by all that the device on the khaki coats of the *askaris* was a bird flying among golden stars over a number of red and white stripes.

When the gray German ship *Admiral* steamed into the harbor the next morning, there was an unwonted bustle along the water-front. Never had so many venders sought to go aboard a north-bound steamer. And among the rowers and boatmen who took them out it was remarked that some desperate cutthroats from the Darajani coffee-shops had turned honest and were trying to make a living selling lace, *kibokos* and ivory ornaments to sea-travelers.

Among the passengers bound for Merry England was Sir General William Henry Babbitt, K. C. B., an able gentleman who had earned a "birthday" title by mowing down defenseless black men with Gatling-guns. To him the consuls of the various countries came to pay their respects. Through the swarm of bumboats the official barges edged toward the big ship, to the accompaniment of much chatter and mellow native profanity.

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Of all these the barge which carried at her stern the stars and stripes attracted the most interest among the fakirs and venders crowding the rail. It was observed by them that it contained two passengers, men, and that the consul's son, who usually accompanied his father on official visits, was absent. In his stead, sitting beside the consul in the stern sheets, was Ray Bartlett, pale and nervous, and with red-rimmed eyes denoting loss of sleep.

But no one on the ship could see, half a mile away on the sea-wall near the military hospital, an old man who danced about and waved his arms as if in impotent rage.

Six husky Masai *askaris*, in khaki uniforms, handled the massive oars of the consular barge and, when the *mashua* reached the side of the steamer, all customs of the East were overturned. The *askaris* were coming aboard! Up the gangplank they scrambled, three ahead and three behind. In between walked Marshall the consul, and Ray Bartlett.

At the deck the venders and sweetmeat-sellers formed a reception-committee. They crowded around, offering their goods, and brown hands loosened up the handles of curved knives concealed in cotton girth-bands. But something was evidently working against them. Allah and Brahm were elsewhere and the avatar of Vishnu was sleeping. And all on account of those thrice-cursed black *askaris* who formed an impregnable wall about the two white men.

In vain the wares were offered; a ring of beaten gold with a priceless ruby from Ceylon at rupees forty-four only; a kimono of the finest China silk. See! A necklace, ideal for a sweetheart, of moonstones and tourmaline. Where was the sahib's sweetheart? She would expect a little something. Yes, *where* was the sahib's sweetheart? If the young *bwana*—a blight on his infidel soul—would only draw near and inspect; hold the gems at arm's length so as to leave the breast unprotected. If he would *only* draw near!

But the young *bwana* did not draw near. Instead the young *bwana*, with the consul *Amerikani*, walked with head erect, in a circle of black protectors, straight to the Captain's cabin, where he and the consul sahib entered, leaving the *askaris* to guard the door.

After many minutes the door opened. It was only *Bwana* Marshall, who went to exchange commonplaces with the great British warrior.

Other homeward passengers arrived with luggage. There were no women; only men—low caste Englishmen, "tick-tacks" from the telegraph-company.

Presently, just before sailing-time, the German Captain sahib himself came from his cabin, looking very grim and stern. Immediately thereafter a dozen sailors, of a European race notoriously cruel to innocent natives and harmless men of Hind, began to sweep the ship clear of all who had no right to be there.

Reluctance to leave was met with the rhinoceros-hide whip, against which no human courage can stand and, amid a babel of screams and curses, the waiting boats were filled.

The sailors were thorough. One Banyani fruit-seller, nephew to an old man on shore, had fallen asleep, apparently by accident, in one of the life-boats under the canvas cover. He was dropped gently over the side and was picked up by one of the boats which were gathered just astern. The consul and his *askaris* left last.

As the engines began to throb, the mooring was dropped and the gray bow began to cleave the quiet waters. For an instant Ray Bartlett appeared on the after deck. He looked down at the clustered boats with a happy smile on his face. He raised his helmet and bowed ceremoniously to the brown, upturned faces. Then he ducked quickly out of sight; for firearms *have* been sold to natives, in spite of the law. But he heard the yells of rage from the boats.

Why? Why? Why? it was argued from boat to boat, should a man, even if nothing more than an unbelieving pig of a white devil, smile happily when leaving his sweetheart forever. No woman had boarded that fire-canoe, not even one disguised as a man. Then, why? Oh, verily the way of the white man was past understanding! And where was the girl? Probably back to her father, repentant. Allah was great.

Ray had smiled happily. He wanted to give his college-yell with a tiger at the end. He was going home.

TEN miles up the coast, off Bububu, where ends the little railroad that runs from Palace Square in the city of Zanzibar, a bell jangled, the propeller reversed and the gray German steamer

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slowly came to a stop. This was at the direct request of the American consul.

Over the rolling bosom of the sea, from Mkokotoni Point, came a black dingy-looking rowboat, steered by a small youth of Yankee antecedents. With lusty strokes the Swahili rowers drew alongside of the lowered gangplank and deposited there a diminutive female figure, veiled from head to foot after the manner of Hindu women abroad. A Teuton sailor went to meet her and she was gently led up the side to the Captain's cabin. And the steamer proceeded out to the Black Waters.

There was much talk and speculation among the passengers concerning the new comer. The rumor that gained greatest credence identified her as a wealthy Maharani, traveling incognito to Aden.

On the trip none saw her. She did not leave at Aden, nor at Port Said. But at Naples she went ashore with a companion, and there, away from the *dasturi* of the East, in the presence of several clerical gentlemen, she cast off any Oriental title she may have had and assumed one more peculiarly adapted to her future.

The Exaltation of Alkali Pete

by Frank Houghton

IT WAS a warm, sunny day in the early part of June, and Dave Smith, Smiley Jay, Peavine Johnson, Angel Pool and Ike Foster sat together smoking in the doorway of the stable. Dave Smith began talking in his slow drawl:

"One o' the most heartrendin' an' extraor'nary ins'ances of the hurried departure of a gent, in the full bloom o' manhood, from this terrestrial spear that I knows of was the——"

"For a real elevatin' brand o' talk," soliloquized Ike thoughtfully, "Dave's sure got 'em all faded."

With a sigh that might almost be felt, Dave relapsed into a dignified silence.

At the moment a large black hornet bent upon exploration buzzed into the stable, missing Angel Pool's left ear by a fraction of

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an inch and so startling that gentleman, who was seated upon the end of a nail-keg that, with an expletive—the repetition of which would be an infringement upon all strict etiquette and a slur upon insects in general—and a hasty ducking of his head, had the misfortune to loose his balance and precipitate himself into Peavine's lap. Peavine, at the moment being engaged in the severe mental strain of translating Dave Smith's last remark into the somewhat complicated and obscure type of English as indulged in by himself and friends.

"I do wish, Angel," he observed, with excusable irritation, "that when yer tryin' to catch flies you wouldn't ac' so blame energetic."

"Flies!" said Angel.

"It weren't a partic'lar rare species neither," continued Peavine, who had seen the hornet.

"Folks 'd think it was carryin' a diamond, the way Angel jumped at it," remarked Smiley.

Angel, a veritable giant, having taken up his position again upon the keg, smoked with a large placidity that was entirely restful.

"You was remarkin' Mr. Smith," said Ike with an ingratiating civility.

"It weren't nothin', Mr. Foster, nothin' whatever, jest a triflin' anecdote I was kind o' recallin' about a little inc'dent in the career of the late Mr. Alkali Pete. Alkali was a well-known figure in the valley in them days. Most every one knew Alkali."

"Knew Alkali well," said Peavine, "but it didn't never strike me that his figure was one folks'd ever be a-heavin' bokays at."

"Figure!" exclaimed Smiley, with withering scorn. "He had about as much figure as a stick o' driftwood. Figure! Jumpin' maniacs!"

"It were jest a figure o' speech I was referrin' to," said Dave with added dignity.

Both Smiley Jay and Peavine Johnson relapsed into a pained silence. The tension of the moment, however, was to some extent relieved by the sudden appearance of young Mike Quinlivan on a half-broken colt evidently running away with him. He fled up the main street, as the sandy trail which the stable faced was grandiloquently called, dodging a soporific-looking sow, which suddenly scrambled to her feet directly in his path, and disappeared in a cloud of dust and a final flirt of his long and disheveled tail in the direction of the Wild Horse ford. As the flying colt passed the group of men, his rider waved a broad Stetson hat and shouted a joyous remark.

"Kids like them," said Angel Pool with melancholy conviction, "is a danger to all respectable citizens in this here town. Did you ketch on to the narrer escape o' that thar sow?"

"Sich kids ought to be destroyed," said Peavine.

"As I remarked previous," said Dave once more, taking up the interrupted thread of his narrative, "one o' the most extraor'nary ins'ances o' a gent bein' cut off in the flower o' his manhood was the sudden h'istin' up o' Alkali—an' him engaged to be married to Bronco Liz at the time. It was sure heartrendin', thar ain't no two ways about it. An' look at the lady! Why she ain't never got rightly over it to this day. I tell you, boys, it were only last month at the Pie Social, she were sayin' to me, 'Dave,' says she, 'it was so blame sudden, an' the height he went,' says she, an' she heaved a sigh you could o' heard in the cellar with the doors shut. I tell you right now, it's the lady I'm sorry for. O' course it were onpleasant for Alkali, comin' when it done on the eve o' his weddin', too, ter'ble onpleasant. But I reckon a gent has to take the ups an' downs; 'The rough with the smooth in this here pilgrimage,' as I once heerd a preacher say.

"But seein' as I was thar an' a kind o' eye-witness as you might say, not as I seen much, bein' occupied with a fool hen when it happened, but I'm considered the best livin' authority of the 'currence, bein' blowed over a middlin' big boulder at the time, but that ain't neither here nor there.

"Well, boys, it wer' this way: You see, me an' Alkali had two galena-claims staked away up on the Sku-kum-chuck Crick, in the Selkirks. I mind Alkali called his 'Lizzie's Hope,' after his girl; an' mine? oh, I jest nat'rally called mine, 'Last Chance,' it's a good enough name, if it do be a bit or'nary, an'——"

"I wouldn't mind havin' a five-dollah bill for every claim o' that name I knows," remarked Angel sadly.

Dave smiled genially. Angel Pool might interrupt him in his story-telling with impunity, but only Angel Pool.

"Alkali always believed in them claims, you know," continued Dave. "Said they

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was goin' to make his an' Lizzie's fortune. He was never tired o' talkin' about what he an' Lizzie 'd do when he realized.

"I mind that Summer we took up consid'ble giant powder, 'cause the rock was kind o' shaley an' dynamite didn't work too well in it. I rec'lect we was driftin' in, in a kind o' an open cut an' the lead showin' up good an' strong, too; standin' near vertical, an' the walls well defined. I mind jest to one side o' the cut thar was a ter'ble big bull-pine near six foot at the butt, an' cl'ar for near a hundred an' twenty foot up without a branch, then a ter'ble big limb stuck out to the no'th side.

"Well, boys, we'd got about half our season's assessment work finished, when one day, about the middle o' the afternoon, we put in a shot an' the showin' after it was sure great. Alkali was tickled right up the back, he was that pleased.

" 'What did I tell you, Dave,' says he. 'Why, son, I wouldn't take one hundred thousand cold plunks for them little claims, an' that ain't no idle dream. Why, Dave, me an' Lizzie 'll travel in our private car yet, see if we don't.'

"I mind we had a bottle o' good Scotch with us, an' we each took a bit o' a jolt an' sat round an' smoked an' chewed the rag for a spell. I mind Alkali had a way o' singin' hymns whenever he was feelin' anyways good an' he sure did tune up that afternoon, singin', 'Thar is a happy land.' I'm kind o' handy at singin' myself an' I ain't no pronounced objection to hymn-tunes; on the contrary I rather likes 'em—you know I was raised ter'ble gentle.

"I mind that afternoon thar was jest one more shot o' black powder we decided on puttin' in afore knockin' off. Accordin' we carried the keg o' giant down to the cut an' stood it thar jest as a fool hen flew past an' settled in a little balsam about ten foot from the ground an' about thirty yards from the cut. Well, as you know, I've always kind o' enjoyed sport, so I started after the fool hen, leavin' Alkali a-settin' on the keg a-smokin' an' kind o' smilin' to himself, no doubt thinkin' o' the time he was goin' to have stayin' in the Waldorf-Astoria an' sich like eatin'-houses.

"Well, as I was sayin', I went after the hen. You see, boys, I was figurin' on noosin' her with a noose at the end o' a long pole. When I was gettin' very handy to her Alkali begun a-singin' 'Thar is a happy land.' He didn't only know the first verse, an' he kep' a-singin' it over an' over ag'n. I mind I was jest in the act o' gettin' the noose over the bird's head when I heard him sing, 'Thar is a happy land.' Well, boys, them was his last words. He'd no more'n said 'em when, Jumpin' Je-rusalem! thar was the awfulest explosion y' ever heard an' I was boosted cl'ar over a middlin'-sized boulder, but I weren't injured a particle. O' course I lost the fool hen.

"Well, boys, I kind o' suspicioned what had happened, an' when I got back to the cut I couldn't see no sign o' Alkali. I think I told you I left him a-smokin'. Now I ain't one o' them folks as is ag'in smokin'. I ain't ag'in it. But I maintain that thar is places to smoke, jest as thar is times to smoke. An' I think maybe you boys 'll agree with me that it ain't the best place to choose a-settin' on the top o' a open keg o' giant powder, partic'lar if you're contemplatin' the holy estate o' matrimony. O' course I'm ready an' willin' to admit that sich a position on a keg, under them circumstances, has its advantages. Jest as some folks maintain that your troubles an' afflictions never get real bad till you're hitched up to a genuine, sympathetic, handsome female. Maybe they're right. I ain't in no position to jedge, bein' a single gent. But all I do know is that when I did get back to the cuttin' thar was no sign whatever o' my friend, Mr. Alkali Pete. It was sure evident that he'd hit the trail, but where in Sam Hill had he gone, that was the question that troubled me consid'ble.

"Well, boys, all that afternoon an' evenin' I hunted for him. I hollered, too, a whole lot an' fired off my gun, but it didn't seem to be no use whatever. Alkali had sure left. I mind, too, I felt kind o' lonesome that night. In the mornin' I got my breakfast pretty middlin' early. Afterward I gathered all Alkali's things together in a bag. I rec'lect noticin' a pa'r o' ver' nice trousers o' his, an' thinkin' how he was wearin' a ter'ble old pa'r when I seen him last, very badly tore.

"When I finished my breakfast I mind I stood before the tent smokin' for a spell an' wonderin' whar Alkali had went. I don't mind admittin' that by that time I was afeared some kind o' accident had happened. While I stood thar figurin' on one thing an' another, sudden I seen a squirrel a-runnin' up the big bull-pine by the cuttin'. Well

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it run purty near to the top an' then it seemed to take fright an' come peltin' down as if it had forgot somethin'.

"When I looked at the top of that thar bull-pine I sure seen what had scart the squirrel. Sure as your settin' thar, boys, thar was Alkali, a-hangin' across the limb. I knew him at once by his pants, which was badly tore. His legs was a-hangin' down one side an' his arms on the other, an' I jedged from his attitude that it was most too late to do anythin' to relieve his sufferin's. I mean o' course it would o' been too late if I had found him earlier. I mind, too, recallin' his last words an' it struck me how ter'ble prophetic they were: 'Thar is a happy land.' Pore old Alkali, an' him over one hundred foot up. Je-rusalem!

"Well, boys, thar was nothin' for it but to leave him thar. Y'u see the blame tree was six foot thick an' the only ax I had was ter'ble dull, an' I didn't have no grindstone. Then, too, the thought come to me as I was takin' a last look at him before pullin' out that he was consid'ble nearer heaven than he'd be in a hole in the ground; o' course, too, he'd cure better, thar was no two ways about that. So I jest kind o' waved my hand to him an' said, 'So-long, ole party,' an' his shirt-tail kind o' fluttered back to me; you see his pants was badly tore; an' then I hit the trail. I tell you right now, boys, it were sure heartrendin'.

"The day after I reached town, I seen Bronco Liz an' I done what I could to break it kind o' easy to her.

" 'Ma'am,' says I, 'it's fine weather we're havin.'

" 'Fine, Dave,' says she. 'Ain't never seen a purtier Summer,' says she.

"O' course she knew me an' Alkali had been up the Skoo-kum-chuck together recent, an' says she,

" 'Seen Pete lately?' says she.

" 'I sure have,' says I.

"O' course she knew it, but women folks is that way.

" 'How's he lookin'?' says she.

" 'He ain't lookin' his best, ma'am,' says I.

" 'Anythin' wrong with him?' says she, lookin' at me kind o' suspicious.

" 'You see it's like this, ma'am,' says I; 'his pants is ter'ble tore an' he's took to tree-climbin',' says I.

" 'Tree-climbin'!' says she.

" 'Sure thing, ma'am, an' I been thinkin' it'd be best, maybe, to postpone the celebration o' your weddin',' says I.

" 'Postpone nothin',' says she. 'But what's he up to now, Dave,' says she.

" 'About one hundred an' ten foot, I'd say, ma'am, but you see that's only guessin'. I didn't have no way o' measurin', ma'am; fact is, ma'am, it's a awful big bull-pine.'

" 'Land-sakes, Dave! Whatever is he doin' up thar?'

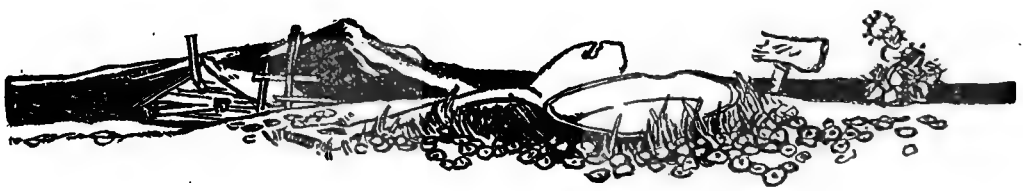
" 'He ain't doin' nothin', ma'am; he's dead!'

"What!' says she, lettin' a bawl out o' her; an' catchin' me by the arm she hollers, 'Take me to him, Dave, oh, take me to him!'

" 'Calm yourself, ma'am,' says I, 'calm yourself. Thar ain't no way o' gettin' to him that I knows of, besides, ma'am, he ain't lookin' his best. His pants is ter'ble tore. He ain't dressed proper to receive lady-visitors, ma'am,' says I.

" 'Oh! oh!' says she, an' I had to support her in my arms, for she was kind o' totterin', the—— I beg your pardon, Mr. Foster, did you make a re-mark?" and Dave Smith turned a cold eye on Ike, who merely shook his head.

"The wo o' some ladies," soliloquized Angel Pool thoughtfully, "is sure awful."



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"Hookum Hai!"

by Talbot Mundy

CHAPTER I

"AND THE BACKBONE OF THE ARMY IS THE NON-COMMISSIONED MAN!"

A BLOOD-RED sun rested its huge disk upon a low mud wall that crested a rise to westward, and flattened at the bottom from its own weight, apparently. A dozen dried-out false-acacia-trees shivered as the faintest puff in all the world of stifling wind moved through them; and a hundred thousand tiny squirrels kept up their aimless scampering in search of food that was not there.

A coppersmith was about the only living thing that seemed to care whether the sun went down or not. He seemed in a hurry to get a job done, and his reiterated "Bong-bong-bong!"—that had never ceased since sunrise, and had driven nearly mad the few humans who were there to hear it—quickened and grew louder. At last Brown came out of a square mud house, to see about the sunset.

HE WAS nobody but plain Bill Brown — or Sergeant William Brown, to give him his full name and entitlements—and the price of him was two rupees per day.

He stared straight at the dull red disk of the sun, and spat with eloquence. Then he wiped the sweat from his forehead, and scratched a place where the prickly heat was bothering him. Next, he buttoned up his tunic, and brushed it down neatly and precisely. There was official business to be done, and a man did that with due formality, heat or no heat.

"Guard, turn out!" he ordered.

Twelve men filed out, one behind the other, from the hut that he had left. They seemed to feel the heat more than Brown did, as they fell in line before Brown's sword. There was no flag, and no flagpole in that nameless health-resort, so the sword, without its scabbard, was doing duty, point downward in the ground, as a totem-pole of Empire. Brown had stuck it there, like Boanerges' boots, and there it stayed from sunrise until sunset, to be displaced by whoever dared to do it, at his peril.

They had no clock. They had nothing, except the uniforms and arms of the Honorable East India Company, as issued in this year of Our Lord, 1857—a cooking-pot or two, a kettle, a little money and a butcher-knife. Their supper bleated miserably some twenty yards away, tied to a tree, and a lean Punjabi squatted near it in readiness to buy the skin. It was a big goat, but it

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was mangy, so he held only two annas in his hand. The other anna (in case that Brown should prove adamant) was twisted in the folds of his pugree, but he was prepared to perjure himself a dozen times, and take the names of all his female ancestors in vain, before he produced it.

The sun flattened a little more at the bottom, and began to move quickly, as it does in India—anxious apparently to get away from the day's ill deeds.

"Shoulder umms!" commanded Brown. "General salute! Present—umms!"

The red sun slid below the sky-line, and the night was on them, as though somebody had shut the lid. Brown stepped to the sword, jerked it out of the ground and returned it to his scabbard in three motions.

"Shoulder—umms! Order—umms! Dismiss!"

The men filed back into the hut again, disconsolately, without swearing and without mirth. They had put the sun to bed with proper military decency. They would have seen humor—perhaps—or an excuse for blasphemy in the omission of such a detail, but it was much too hot to swear at the execution of it.

Besides, Brown was a strange individual who detested swearing, and it was a very useful thing, and wise, to humor him. He had a way of his own, and usually got it.

BROWN posted a sentry at the hut-door, and another at the cross-roads which he was to guard, then went round behind the hut to bargain with the goatskin-merchant. But he stopped before he reached the tree.

"Boy!" he called, and a low-caste native servant came toward him at a run.

"Is that fakir there still?'

"Ha, sahib!

"Ha? Can't you learn to say 'yes,' like a human being?"

"Yes, sahib!"

"All right. I'm going to have a talk with him. Kill the goat, and tell the Punjabi to wait, if he wants to buy the skin."

"Ha, sahib!"

Brown spun round on his heel, and the servant wilted.

"Yes, sahib!" he corrected.

Brown left him then, with a nod that conveyed remission of cardinal sin, and a warning not to repeat the offense. As the native ran off to get the butcher-knife and sharpen it, it was noticeable that he wore a chastened look.

"Send Sidiki after me!" Brown shouted after him, and a minute later a nearly naked Beluchi struck a match and emerged from the darkness, with the light of a lantern gleaming on his skin. He followed like a snake, and only Brown's sharp, authority-conveying footfalls could be heard as he trudged sturdily — straight - backed, eyes straight in front of him—to where an age-old baobab loomed like a phantom in the night. He marched like a man in armor. Not even the terrific heat of a Central-Indian night could take the stiffening out of him.

The Beluchi ran ahead, just before they reached the tree. He stopped and held the lantern up to let its light fall on some object that was close against the tree-trunk. At a good ten-pace distance from the object Brown stopped and stared. The lamplight fell on two little dots that gleamed. Brown stepped two paces nearer. Two deadly, malicious human eyes blinked once, and then stared back at him.

"Does he never sleep?" asked Brown.

The Beluchi said something or other in a language that was full of harsh hard gutturals, and the owner of the eyes chuckled. His voice seemed to be coming from the tree itself, and there was nothing of him visible except the cruel keen eyes that had not blinked once since Brown drew nearer.

"Well?"

"Sahib, he does not answer."

"Tell him I'm tired of his not answering. Tell him that if he can't learn to give a civil answer to a civilly put question I'll exercise my authority on him!"

The Beluchi translated, or pretended to. Brown was not sure which, for he was rewarded with nothing but another chuckle, which sounded like water gurgling down a drain.

"Does he still say nothing?"

"Absolutely nothing, sahib."

Brown stepped up closer yet, and peered into the blackness, looking straight into the eyes that glared at him, and from them down at the body of the owner of them. The Beluchi shrunk away.

"Have a care, sahib! It is dangerous! This very holy—most holy—most religious man!"

"Bring that lantern back."

"He will curse you, sahib!"

"Do you hear me?"

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The Beluchi came nearer again, trembling with fright. Brown snatched the lamp away from him, and pushed it forward toward the fakir, moving it up and down to get a view of the whole of him. There was nothing that he saw that would reassure or comfort or please a devil even. It was ultradevilish, both by design and accident —conceived and calculated ghastliness, peculiar to India. Brown shuddered as he looked, and it took more than the merely horrible to make him betray emotion.

"What god do you say he worships?"

"Sahib, I know not. I am a Mussulman. These Hindus worship many gods."

The fakir chuckled again, and Brown held the lantern yet nearer to him to get a better view. The fakir's skin was not oily, and for all the blanket-heat it did not glisten, so his form was barely outlined against the blackness that was all but tangible behind him.

Brown spat again, as he drew away a step. He could contrive to express more disgust and more grim determination in that one rudimentary act than even a Stamboul Softa can.

"So he's holy, is he?"

"Very, very holy, sahib!"

Again the fakir chuckled, and again Brown held his breath and pushed the lantern closer to him.

"I believe the brute understands the Queen's English!"

"He understanding all things, sahib! He knowing all things what will happen! Mind, sahib! He may curse you!"

But Brown appeared indifferent to the danger that he ran. To the fakir's unconcealed discomfort, he proceeded to examine him minutely, going over him with the aid of the lantern inch by inch, from the toe-nails upward.

"Well," he commented aloud, "if the army's got an opposite, here's it! I'd give a month's pay for the privilege of washing this brute, just as a beginning!"

THE man's toe-nails—for he really was a man!—were at least two inches long. They were twisted spirally, and some of them were curled back on themselves into disgusting-looking knots. What walking he had ever done had been on his heels. His feet were bent upward, and fixed upward, by a deliberately cultivated cramp.

His legs, twisted one above the other in a squatting attitude, were lean and hairy, and covered with open sores which were kept open by the swarm of insects that infested him. His loin-cloth was rotting from him. His emaciated body—powdered and smeared with ashes and dust and worse—was perched bolt-upright on a flat earth dais that had once on a time been the throne of a crossroads idol. One arm, his right one, hung by his side in an almost normal attitude, and his right fingers moved incessantly like a man's who is kneading clay. But his other arm was rigid—straight up in the air above his head; set, fixed, cramped, paralyzed in that position, with the fist clenched. And through the back of the closed fist the fakir's nails were growing.

But, worse than the horror of the arm was the creature's face, with the evidence of torture on it, and fiendish delight in torture for the torture's sake. His eyes were his only organs that really lived still, and they expressed the steely hate and cruelty, the mad fanaticism, the greedy self-love—self-immolating for the sake of self—that is the thoroughgoing fakir's stock in trade. And his lips were like the graven lips of a Hindu temple god, self-satisfied, self-worshiping, contemptuous, and cruel. He chuckled again, as Brown finished his inspection.

"So that crittur's holy, is he? Well, tell him that I'm set here to watch these crossroads. Tell him I'm supposed to question every one who comes, and find out what his business is, and arrest him if he can't give a proper account of himself. Say he's been here three days now, and that that's long enough for any one to find his tongue in. Tell him if I don't get an answer from him here and now I'll put him in the clink!"

"But, sahib——"

"You tell him what I say, d'you hear?"

The Beluchi made haste to translate, trembling as he spoke, and wilting visibly when the baleful eyes of the fakir rested on him for a second. The fakir answered something in a guttural undertone.

"What does he say?"

"That he will curse you, sahib!"

"Sentry!" shouted Brown.

"Sir!" came the ready answer, and the sling-swivels of a rifle clicked as the man on guard at the crossroads shouldered it. There are some men who are called "sir" without any title to it, just as there are

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some sergeants who receive a colonel's share of deference when out on a non-commissioned officer's command. Bill Brown was one of them.

"Come here, will you!"

There came the sound of heavy footfalls, and a thud as a rifle-butt descended to the earth again. Brown moved the lamp, and its beams fell on a rifleman who stood close beside him at attention—like a jinnee formed suddenly from empty blackness.

"Arrest this fakir. Cram him in the clink."

"Very good, sir!"

The sentry took one step forward, with his fixed bayonet at the "charge," and the fakir sat still and eyed him.

"Oh, have a care, sahib!" wailed the Beluchi. "This is very holy man!"

"Silence!" ordered Brown. "Here. Hold the lamp."

The bayonet-point pressed against the fakir's ribs, and he drew back an inch or two to get away from it. He was evidently able to feel pain when it was inflicted by any other than himself.

"Come on," growled the sentry. "Forward. Quick march. If you don't want two inches in you!"

"Don't use the point!" commanded Brown. "You might do him an injury. Treat him to a sample of the butt!"

The sentry swung his rifle round with an underhanded motion that all riflemen used to practise in the short-range-rifle days. The fakir winced, and gabbled something in a hurry to the man who held the lamp.

"He says that he will speak, sahib!"

"Halt, then." commanded Brown. "Order arms. Tell him to hurry up!"

The Beluchi translated, and the fakir answered him, in a voice that sounded hard and distant and emotionless.

"He says that he, too, is here to watch the crossroads, sahib! He says that he will curse you if you touch him!"

"Tell him to curse away!"

"He says not unless you touch him, sahib."

"Prog him off his perch!" commanded Brown.

THE rifle leaped up at the word, and its butt landed neatly on the fakir's ribs, sending him reeling backward off his balance, but not upsetting him completely. He recovered his poise with quite astonishing activity, and shuffled himself back again to the center of the dais. His eyes blazed with hate and indignation, and his breath came now in sharp gasps that sounded like escaping steam. He needed no further invitation to commence his cursing. It burst out with a rush, and paused for better effect, and burst out again in a torrent. The Beluchi hid his face between his hands.

"Now translate that!" commanded Brown, when the fakir stopped for lack of breath.

"Sahib, I dare not! Sahib——"

Brown took a threatening step toward him, and the Beluchi changed his mind. Brown's disciplining methods were a too recently encountered fact to be outdone by a fakir's promises of any kind of not-yet-met damnation.

"Sahib, he says that because your man has touched him, both you and your man shall lie within a week helpless upon an ant-hill, still living, while the ants run in and out among your wounds. He says that the ants shall eat your eyes, sahib, and that you shall cry for water, and there shall be no water within reach—only the sound of water just beyond you. He says that first you shall be beaten, both of you, until your backs and the soles of your feet run blood, in order that the ants may have an entrance!"

"Is he going to do all this?"

The Beluchi passed the question on, and the fakir tossed him an answer to it.

"He says, sahib, that the gods will see to it."

"So the gods obey his orders, do they. Well, they've a queer sense of duty! What else does he prophesy?"

"About your soul, sahib, and the sentry's soul."

"That's interesting! Translate!"

"He says, sahib, that for countless centuries you and your man shall inhabit the carcasses of snakes, to eat dirt and be trodden on and crushed, until you learn to have respect for very holy persons!"

"Is he going to have the ordering of that?"

"He says that the gods have already ordered it."

"It won't make much difference, then, what I do now. If that's in store for me in any case, I may as well get my money's worth before the fun begins! Tell him that unless he can give me a satisfactory reason for being here I shall treat him to a little

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more rifle-butt, and something else afterward that he will like even less!"

"He says," explained the Beluchi, after a moment's conversation with the fakir, "that he is here to see what the gods have prophesied. He says that India will presently be whelmed in blood!"

"Whose blood?"

"Yours and that of others. He says, did you not see the sunset?"

"What of the sunset?"

Brown looked about him and, save where the lantern cast a fitful light on the fakir and the sentry and the native servant, and threw into faint relief the shadowy, snake-like tendrils of the baobab, his eyes failed to pierce the gloom. The sunset was a memory. In that heavy, death-dark silence it seemed almost as though there had never been a sun.

" 'A blot of blood,' he says. He says the order has been given. He says that half of India shall run blood within a day, and the whole of it within a week!"

"Who gave the order?"

"He answers '*Hookum hai!*' — which means 'It is an order!' Nothing more does the holy fakir say."

"To the clink with him!" commanded Brown. "I'm tired of these Old Mother Shipton babblings. That's the third useless Hindu fanatic within a week who has talked about India being drenched in blood. Let him go in to the depot under guard, and do his prophesying there! Bring him along."

The sentry's rifle-butt rose again and threatened business. The Beluchi gave a warning cry, and the fakir tumbled off his dais. Then, with the trembling Beluchi walking on ahead with the lantern, and Brown and the sentry urging from behind, the fakir jumped and squirmed and wobbled on his all but useless feet toward the guard-room. When they reached the tree where the goat had bleated, the Punjabi skin-buyer rose up, took one long look at the fakir and ran.

"Well, I'll be——!" exclaimed the sentry.

"You'll be worse than that," said Brown, "if you use that language anywhere where I'm about! I'll not have it, d'you hear? Get on ahead, and open the door of the clink!"

The sentry obeyed him, and a moment later the fakir was thrust into a four-square mud-walled room, and the door was locked on him.

"Back to your post," commanded Brown. "And next time I hear you swearing, I'll treat you to a double-trick, my man! About turn. Quick march."

THE sentry trudged off without daring to answer him, and Brown took a good look at the fakir through the iron bars that protected the top half of the door. Then he went off to see about his supper, of newly slaughtered goat-chops and chupatties baked in ghee. His soul revolted at the thought of it, but it was his duty to eat it and set an example to the men; and duty was the only thing that mattered in Bill Brown's scheme of things.

"Maybe it's true," he muttered, "and maybe it's all lies; there's no knowing. Maybe India's going to run blood, as these fakirs seem to think, and maybe it isn't. There'll be more blood shed than mine in that case! '*Hookum hai*'—'It is orders,' heh? Well—there's more than one sort of '*Hookum hai!*' I've got my orders too!"

He doubled the guard, when supper had been eaten and the guard-room had been swept and the pots and kettle had been burnished until they shone. Then he tossed a chupatty to the imprisoned fakir, spat again from sheer disgust, lit his pipe and went and sat where he could hear the foot-beats of the sentries.

"They can't help their religion," he muttered. "The poor infidels don't know no better. And they've got a right to think what they please about me or the Company. But I've no patience with uncleanliness! That's wrong any way you look at it. That critter can't see straight for the dirt on him, nor think straight for that matter. He's a disgrace to humanity. Priest or fakir or whatever he is, if I live to see to-morrow's sun I'll hand him over to the guard and have him washed!"

Having formed that resolution, Brown dismissed all thoughts of the fakir. His memory went back to home—the clean white cottage on the Sussex Downs, and the clean white girl who once on a time had waited for him there. For the next few hours, until the guard was changed, the only signs or sounds of life were the glowing of Brown's pipe, the steady footfalls of

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the sentries and occasional creakings from the hell-hot guard-room, where sleepless soldiers tossed in prickly discomfort.

CHAPTER II

"WHY SHOULD THE ONE BE LOYAL, AND THE OTHER NOT?"

BILL BROWN, with his twelve, had not been set to watch a lonely cross-road for the fun of it. One road was a well-made highway, and led from a walled city, where three thousand men sweated and thought of England, to another city, where five thousand armed natives drew England's pay, and wore English uniforms.

The other road was a snake-like trail, nearly as wide but not nearly so well kept. It twisted here and there amid countless swarming native villages, and was used almost exclusively by natives, whose rightful business was neither war nor peace nor the contriving of either of them. It had been a trade-road when history was being born, and the laden ox-carts creaked along it still, as they had always done and always will do until India awakes.

But there are few men in the world who attend to nothing but their rightful business, and there are even more in India than elsewhere who are prone to neglect their own affairs and stir up sedition among others. There are few fighting-men among that host. They are priests for the most part or fakirs or make-believe pedlers or confessed and shameless mendicants; and they have no liking for the trunk roads, where the tangible evidence of Might and Majesty may be seen marching in eight-hundred-man battalions. They prefer to dream along the byways, and set other people dreaming. They lead, when the crash comes, from behind.

Though the men who made the policies of the Honorable East India Company were mostly blind to the moving finger on the wall, and chose to imagine themselves secure against a rising of the millions they controlled; and though most of their military officers were blinder yet, and failed to read the temper of the native troops in their immediate command, still, there were other men who found themselves groping, at least two years before the Mutiny of '57. They were groping for something intangible and noiseless and threatening which they felt was there in a darkness, but which one could not see.

BAINES was one of them—Lieutenant-General Baines, commanding at Bholat. His troops were in the center of a spider's web of roads that criss-crossed and drained a province. There were big trunk arteries, which took the flow of life from city to walled city, and a mass of winding veins in the shape of grass-grown country tracks. He could feel, if any man could, the first faint signs of fever rising, and he was placed where he could move swiftly, and cut deep in the right spot, should the knife be needed.

He was like a surgeon, though, who holds a lancet and can use it, but who lacks permission. The poison in India's system lay deep, and the fever was slow in showing itself. And meanwhile the men who had the ordering of things could see neither necessity nor excuse for so much as a parade of strength. They refused, pointblank and absolutely, to admit that there was, or could be, any symptom of unrest.

He dared not make new posts for officers, for officers would grumble at enforced exile in the country districts, and the Government would get to hear of it, and countermand. But there were non-commissioned officers in plenty, and it was not difficult to choose the best of them—three men—and send them, with minute detachments, to three different points of vantage. Non-commissioned officers don't grumble, or if they do no one gets to hear of it, or minds. And they are just as good as officers at watching crossroads and reporting what they see and hear.

So where a little cluster of mud huts ached in the heat of a right angle where the trunk road crossed a native road some seventy miles from Bholat, Bill Brown—swordsman and sergeant and strictest of martinets, as well as sentimentalist—had been set to watch and listen and report.

THERE were many cleverer men in the non-commissioned ranks of Baines's command, many who knew more of the native languages, and who had more imagination. But there was none who knew better how to win the unqualified respect and the obedience of British and native alike, or who could be better counted on to obey an order, when it came, literal-

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ly, promptly and in the teeth of anything.

Brown's theories on religion were a thing to marvel at, and walk singularly wide of, for he was a preacher with a pair of fists when thoroughly aroused. And his devotion to a girl in England whom no one in his regiment had ever seen, and of whom he did not even possess a likeness, was next door to being pitiable. His voice was like a raven's, with something rather less than a raven's sense of melody; he was very prone to sing, and his songs were mournful ones. He was not a social acquisition in any generally accepted sense, although his language was completely free from blasphemy or coarseness. His ideas were too cut and dried to make his conversation even interesting. But his loyalty and his sense of duty were as adamant.

He had changed the doubled guard at the crossroads, and had posted two fresh men by the mud-walled guard-room door. He had lit his pipe for the dozenth time, and had let it go out again while he hummed a verse of a Covenanters' hymn. And he had just started up to walk over to the cell and make a cursory inspection of his prisoner, when his ears caught a distant sound that was different from any of the night-sounds, though scarcely louder.

Prompt as a rifle in answer to the trigger, he threw himself down on all fours, and laid his ear to the ground. A second later, he was on his feet again.

"Guard!" he yelled. "Turn out!"

Cots squeaked and jumped, and there came a rush of hurrying feet. The eight men not on watch ran out in single file, still buttoning their uniforms, and lined up beside the two who watched the guard-room door.

"Stand easy!" commanded Brown. Then he marched off to the crossroads, finding his way in the blackness more by instinct and sense of direction than from any landmark, for even the road beneath his feet was barely visible.

"D'you mean to tell me that neither of you men can hear that sound?" he asked the sentries.

Both men listened intently, and presently one of them made out a very faint and distant noise, that did not seem to blend in with the other night-sounds.

"Might be a native drum?" he hazarded.

"No, 'tain't!" said the other. "I got it now. It's a horse galloping. Tired horse, by the sound of him, and coming this way. All right, sergeant."

"One of you go two hundred yards along the road, and form an advance-post, so to speak. Challenge him the minute he's within ear-shot, and shoot him if he won't halt. If he halts, pass him along to Number Two. Number Two, pass him along to the guard-room, where I'll deal with him! Which of you's Number One? Number One, then—forward—quick—march!"

The sentry trudged off in one direction, and Bill Brown in another. The sentry concealed itself behind a rock that flanked the road, and Brown spent the next few minutes in making the guard "port arms," and carefully inspecting their weapons with the aid of a lantern. He had already inspected them once since supper, but he knew the effect that another inspection would be likely to produce. Nothing goes farther toward making men careful and ready at the word than incessant and unexpected but quite quietly performed inspection of minutest details.

He produced the effect of setting the men on the *qui vive* without alarming them.

SUDDENLY, the farthest advanced sentry's challenge rang out.

"Frie-e-e-e-nd!" came the answer, in a nasal, high-pitched wail, but the galloping continued.

"Halt, I tell you!" A breech-bolt clicked, and then another one. They were little sounds, but they were different, and the guard could hear them plainly. The galloping horse came on.

"Cra-a-a-a-ack!" went the sentry's rifle, and the flash of it spurted for an instant across the road, like a sheet of lightning. And, just as lightning might, it showed an instantaneous vision of a tired gray horse, foam-flecked and furiously ridden, pounding down the road head on. The vision was blotted by the night again before any one could see who rode the horse, or what his weapons were—if any—or form a theory as to why he rode.

But the winging bullet did what the sentry's voice had failed to do. There came a clatter of spasmodic hoof-beats, an erratic shower of sparks, a curse in clean-lipped, decent Urdu; a grunt, a struggle, more sparks again, and then a thud, followed by a devoutly worded prayer that Allah, the

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all-wise provider of just penalties, might blast the universe.

"Stop talkin'!" said the sentry, and a black-bearded Rajput rolled free, and looked up to find a bayonet-point within three inches of his eye.

"*Poggul!*" snarled the Mohammedan.

"*Poggul's* no password!" said the sentry. "Neither to my good-nature nor to nothing else. Put up your 'ands, and get on your feet, and march! Look alive, now! Call me a fool, would yer? Wait till the sergeant's through with yer, and see!"

The Rajput chose to consider a retort beneath his dignity. He rose, and took one quick look at the horse, which was still breathing.

"Your bayonet just there," he said, "and press. So he will die quickly."

The sentry placed his bayonet-point exactly where directed, and leaned his weight above it. The horse gave a little shudder, and lay still.

"*Poggul!*" said the Rajput once again. And this time the sentry looked and saw cold steel within three inches of his eye!

"Your rifle!" said the Rajput. "Hand it here!"

And, to save his eyesight, the sentry complied, while the Rajput's ivory-white teeth grinned at him pleasantly.

"Now, hands to your sides! Attention! March!" the Rajput ordered, and with his own bayonet at his back the sentry had to march, whether he wanted to or not, by the route that the other chose, toward the guard-room. The Rajput seemed to know by instinct where the second sentry stood although the man's shape was quite invisible against the night. He called out, "Friend!" again as he passed him, and the sentry, hearing the first sentry's footsteps, imagined that the real situation was reversed.

SO, OUT of a pall of blackness, to the accompanying sound of rifles being brought up to the shoulder, a British sentry—feeling and looking precisely like a fool—marched up to his own guard-room, with a man who should have been his prisoner in charge of him.

"Halt!" commanded Brown. "Who or what have you got there, Stanley?"

"Stanley is my prisoner at present!" said a voice that Brown vaguely recognized.

He stepped up closer, to make sure.

"What, you? Juggut Khan!"

"Aye, Brown sahib! Juggut Khan—with tidings, and a dead gray horse on which to bear them! If this fool could only use his bayonet as he can shoot, I think I would be dead too. His brains, though, are all behind his right eye. Tie him up, where no little child can come and make him prisoner!"

"Arrest that man!" commanded Brown, and two men detached themselves from the end of the guard, and stood him between them, behind the line.

"Here's his rifle!" smiled Juggut Khan, and Brown received it with an ill grace.

"How did you get past the other sentry?" he asked.

"Oh, easily! You English are only brave; you have no brains. Sometimes one part of the rule is broken, but the other never. You are not always brave!"

"I suppose you're angry because he killed your horse?"

"I am angry, Brown sahib, for greater happenings than that! The man conceivably was right, since I did not halt for him, and I suppose he had his orders. I am angry because the standard of rebellion is raised, and because of what it means to me!"

"Are you drunk, Juggut Khan?"

"Your honor is pleased to be humorous? No, I am not drunk. Nor have I eaten opium. I have eaten of the bread of bitterness this day, and drunk of the cup of gall. I have seen British officers—good, brave fools, some of whom I knew and loved—killed by the men they were supposed to lead. I have seen a barracks burning, and a city given over to be looted. I have seen white women—nay, sahib, steady!—I have seen them run before a howling mob, and I have seen certain of them shot by their own husbands!"

"Quietly!" ordered Brown. "Don't let the men hear!"

"One of them I slew myself, because her husband, who was wounded, sent me to her and bade me kill her. She died bravely. And certain others I have hidden where the mutineers are not likely to discover them at present. I ride now for succor—or, I rode, rather, until your expert marksman interfered with me! I now need another horse."

"You mean that the native troops have mutinied?"

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"I mean rather more than that, sahib. Mohammedans and Hindus are as one, and the crowd is with them This is probably the end of the powder-train, for, from what I heard shouted by the mutineers, almost the whole of India is in revolt already!"

"Why?"

"God knows, sahib! The reason given is that the cartridges supplied are greased with the blended fat of pigs and cows, thus defiling both Hindu and Mohammedan alike. But, if you ask me, the cause lies deeper. In the meantime, the rebels have looted Jailpore and burned their barracks, and within an hour or two they will start along this road for Bholat, which they have a mind to loot likewise. My advice to you is retire at once. Get me another horse from somewhere, that I may carry warning. Then follow me as fast as you and your men can move."

"Bah!" said Brown. "They'll find General Baines to deal with them at Bholat."

"Who knows yet how many in Bholat have not risen? Are you positive that the garrison there has not already been surrounded by rebels? I am not! I would not be at all surprised to learn that General Baines is so busy defending himself that he can not move in any direction. And—does your honor mean to hold this guard-room here against five thousand?"

"I mean to obey my orders!" answered Brown.

"And your orders are?"

"My orders!"

"Would they preclude the provision of another horse for me?"

"There's a village about a mile away, down over yonder, where I think you'll find a decent horse—along that road there."

"And your honor's orders would possibly permit a certain payment for the horse?"

"Positively not!" said Brown.

"Then——"

"To seize a horse, for military use, under the spur of necessity, and after giving a receipt for it, would be in order."

"So I am to spend the night wandering around the countryside, in a vain endeavor to——"

But Brown was doing mathematics in his head. Two men to guard prisoners, two on guard at the crossroads, two at the guard-room door—six from twelve left six, and six were not enough to rape a countryside.

"Guard!" he ordered. "Release that prisoner. Now, you Stanley, let this be a lesson to you, and remember that I only set you free because I'd have been short-handed otherwise. Number One! Stand guard between the clink and the guard-room door. Keep an eye on both. The remainder—form two-deep. Right turn! By the left, quick—march! Left wheel! . . . . . Now," he said, turning to Juggut Khan, "if you'll come along I'll soon get a horse for you!"

THE Rajput strode along beside him, and gave him some additional information as they went, Brown taking very good care all the time to keep out of ear-shot of the men and to speak to Juggut Khan in low tones. He learned, among other things, that Juggut Khan had lost every anna that he owned, and had only escaped with his life by dint of luck and swordsmanship and most terrific riding.

"Are all of you Rajputs loyal?" asked Brown.

"I know not. I know that I myself shall stay loyal until the end!"

"Well—the end is not in doubt. There can only be one end!" commented Brown.

"Of a truth, sahib, I believe that you are right. There can only be one end. This night is not more black, this horizon is no shorter, than the outlook!"

"Then, you mean——"

"I mean, sahib, that this uprising is more serious than you—or any other Englishman—is likely to believe. I believe that the side I fight for will be the losing side."

"And yet, you stay loyal?"

"Why not?"

"All the same, Juggut Khan—I'm not emotional, or a man of many words. I don't trust Indians as a rule! I—but—here—will you shake hands?"

"Certainly, sahib!" said the Rajput. "We be two men, you and I! Why should the one be loyal and the other not?"

"When this is over," said Brown, "if it ends the way we want, and we're both alive, I'd like to call myself your friend!"

"I have always been your friend, sahib, and you mine, since the day when you bandaged up a boy and gave him your own drinking-water and carried him in to Bholat on your shoulders, twenty miles or more."

"Oh, as for that—any other man would

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have done the same thing. That was nothing!"

"Strange that when a white man does an honorable deed he lies about it!" said Jugget Khan. "That was not nothing, sahib, and you know it was not nothing! You know that from the heat and the exertion you were ill for more than a month afterward. And you know that there were others there, of my own people, who might have done what you did, and did not!"

"But, hang it all! Why drag up a little thing like that at a time like this?"

"Because, sahib, I might have no other opportunity, and——"

"Well? And what?"

"And the Rajput boy whom you carried was my son!"

CHAPTER III

"MY ORDERS ARE TO HOLD THIS POST UNTIL RELIEVED!"

THE finding of a remount for Juggut Khan was not so troublesome as might have been supposed. The rumors and plans and whispered orders for the coming struggle had been passed around the countryside for months past, and every man who owned a horse had it stalled safely near him, for use when the hour should come.

There were country-ponies and Arabs and Kathiawaris and Khaubulis among which to pick, and though the average run of them was worse than merely bad, and though both best and worst were hidden away whenever possible, good horses were discoverable. Within an hour, Bill Brown, with the aid of his men, had routed out a Khaubuli stallion for Juggut Khan, one fit to carry him against time the whole of the way to Bholat.

The Rajput mounted him where Brown unearthed him, and watched the signing of a scribbled-out receipt with a cynical smile.

"If he comes to claim his money for the horse," said Juggut Khan, "I—even I, who am penniless—will pay him. Good-by, Brown sahib!" He leaned over and grasped the sergeant by the hand. "Take my advice, now. I know what is happening and what has happened. Fall back on Bholat at once. Hurry! Seize horses or even asses for your men, and ride in hotfoot. Salaam!"

He drove his right spur in, wheeled the horse and started across country in the direction of Bholat at a hand-gallop, guiding himself solely by the soldier's sixth sense of direction, and leaving the problem of possible pitfalls to the horse.

"If what he says is true," said Brown, as the clattering hoof-beats died away "and I'm game to take my oath he wouldn't lie to me, I'd give more than a little to have him with me for the next few hours!"

THE men came clustering round him now, anxious for an explanation. They had held their tongues while Juggut Khan was there, because they happened to know Brown too well to do otherwise. He would have snubbed any man who dared to question him before the Indian. But, now that the Indian was gone, curiosity could stay no longer within bounds.

"What is it, sergeant? Anything been happening? What's the news? What's that I heard him say about rebellion? They're a rum lot, them Rajputs. D' you think he's square? Tell us, sergeant!"

"Listen, then. Rebellion has broken out. The native barracks at Jailpore have been burned, and all the English officers are killed—or so says Juggut Khan. He's riding on, to carry the news to General Baines. He says that the mutineers are planning to come along this way some time within the next few hours!"

"What are we going to do, then?"

"That's my business! I'm in command here!"

"Yes, but sergeant—aren't you going back to Bholat? Aren't you going to follow him? Are you going to stay here and get cut up? We'll get caught here like rats in a trap!"

"Are you giving orders here?" asked Brown acidly. "Fall in! Come on, now! Hurry! 'Tshun — eyes right — ri' — dress. Eyes—front. Ri'—turn. By the left—quick—march! Silence, now! Left! Left! Left!"

He marched them back toward the crossroads without giving them any further opportunity to remonstrate or ask for information.

It was not until he reached the crossroads, without being challenged, that he showed any sign of being in any way disturbed.

"Sentry!" he shouted. "Sentry!"

But there was no answer.

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"Halt!" he ordered, and he himself went forward to investigate. The blackness swallowed him, but the men could hear him move, and they heard him fall. They heard him muttering, too, within ten paces of them. Then they heard his order.

"Bring a light here, some one."

One man produced a piece of candle, struck a match and lit it. A moment later they had all broken order, and were standing huddled up together like a frightened flock of sheep, peering through dancing, candle-lit shadows at something horrible that Brown was handling.

"What is it, sergeant?"

"What in hell's happened?"

"Who was that swearing?" inquired Brown, with a sudden look up across his shoulder. "You, Taylor? You again? Swearing in the presence of death? Talking of hell, with your two comrades lying dead at the crossroads, and you like to follow both o' them at any minute?"

Both of the guards lay dead. They lay quite neatly, side by side, without a sign about them to show that they had met with violence. Brown rolled one body over, though, and then the cause of death became more obvious. A stream of blood welled out of the man's back, from between the shoulder-blades—warm blood, that had not even started to coagulate.

"They've been dead about three minutes!" commented Brown, rising, and wiping his hands in the road-dust to get the blood off them. "Pick 'em up. Carefully, now! Frog-march 'em, face-downwards. That's better! Now, forward. Quick, march!"

THE procession advanced toward the guard-house in grim silence, and once again there was no challenge when there should have been. The lamp was still burning in the guard-room, for they could see it plainly as they drew nearer, but there was no noise of a sentry's footfalls, or hoarse "Halt!" and "Who comes there?"

Nor was there any sign yet of the man whom Brown had left to guard both "clink" and guard-room. Brown let them take their dead comrades into the guard-room first, then set two fresh guards at the door, and covered up the bodies with a sheet before commencing to investigate.

He started off toward the cell where he had imprisoned the fakir. He went by himself, and no one volunteered to go with him.

He had gone five yards when the second explanation met his eyes. This time there was no need to stoop down, nor to turn any body over. The sentry whom he had left to guard both cell and guard-room stood bolt upright, with his mouth and his eyes wide open; skewered to the wall of the guard-house by an iron spike, which pierced his chest.

"A lamp and four men here!" ordered Brown, without waiting to let the horror of the sight sink in. "Take that poor chap down, and lay him in the guard-room beside the others. How? How should I know? Pull it out, or break it off—I don't care which; don't leave him there, that's all."

He walked on toward the cell-door, while they labored, and fingered gingerly around the spike, which must have been driven through the sentry's chest with a hammer.

"I thought as much!" he muttered. And, though he had not thought as much, he might have done so. "I knew that a man who could maim his own body in that way was capable of any crime in the calendar!"

The door of the cell stood open, and there was no sign of any fakir, or of any one who might have helped him go—nothing but an empty cell, with the haunting smell of the fakir still abiding in it.

Bill Brown spat, and closed the cell door.

"I'm thinking that Juggut Khan told nothing but the truth," he muttered. "Things look bright, don't they, if that's so! Ohey, ohey! I'd have liked to see England just once again—I would indeed. If I could only see *her* just once. If I'd a letter from her, or her picture. This is a rotten, rat-in-a-hole, lonely, uncreditable way to die! I wish Juggut Khan were here. I'd have somebody to help me keep my good courage up in that case."

The lock on the cell-door was broken, so he only closed it, then started back toward the guard-room.

"Three rifles, and three ammunition-pouches gone!" he muttered. "That's three weapons they've got, in any case. A hornets' nest'd be better stopping in than this place."

He overtook the men who were carrying in the nail-killed sentry, and he saw that their faces were drawn and white. So were those of the other men, who were clustered in the guard-room door.

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"What next, sergeant? Hadn't we better be quick? Why not burn the place? That'd do instead o' buryin' the dead ones, and it'd give us a light to get away by. Might serve as a beacon, too. Might fetch assistance!"

It was evident that panic had set in.

"Fall in!" commanded Brown, and his straight back took on a curve that meant straightness to the *n*th power.

"'Tshun! Ri'—dress! Eyes—front!"

He glared at them for just about one minute before he spoke, and during that minute each man there realized that what was coming would be quite irrevocable.

"I'm sergeant here. My orders are to hold this post until relieved. Therefore—and I hope there's no man here holds any other notion; I hope it for his own sake!—until we are relieved, we're going to hold it! Moreover, this command is going to be a real command, from now on. It's going to buck up. I'm going to put some ginger in it. There are three dead men here to be avenged, and I'm going to avenge 'em, or make you do it! And if any man imagines he's going to help himself by feeling afraid, let me assure him that the only thing he needs to fear is me! I've a right to command men—I know how—I intend to do it. And if I've got to make men first out of whey-faced cowards, why, I'm game to do it, and this is just where I begin! Now! Anybody got a word to say?"

There was grim silence.

"Good! I'll assume, then, until I'm contradicted, that you're all brave men. Into the guard-room with you!"

"Sahib! Sahib!" said a voice beside him.

"Well? What?"

It was the Beluchi interpreter who had carried the lamp for him that evening when he arrested the fakir.

"Run, sahib! It is time to run away!"

"Go on, then! Why don't you run?"

"I am afraid, sahib."

"Of what?"

"Of the men who slew the soldiers. Sahib! Remember what the fakir said. You will be pegged out on an ant-hill, sahib, when you have been beaten. Run, while there is yet time!"

"Did you see them kill my men?"

"Nay, sahib!"

"How was that?"

"I ran away and hid, sahib."

'How many were there?"

"Very many. The Punjabi skin-buyer brought them."

"He did, did he? Very well! Did he go off with the fakir?"

"I think he did. I did not see."

"Well, we'll suppose he did, then. And when the day breaks, we'll suppose that we can find him, and we'll go in search of him, and——I wouldn't like to be that Punjabi when I do find him! Get into the guard-room, and wait in there until I give you leave to stir."

CHAPTER IV

THREE WOMEN, ONE RAJPUT, AND A MESSAGE NOT BY HAND

AN INDIAN city that has yet to have its mysteries laid bare and banished by electric light is a stage deliberately set for massacre. The bazaars run crisscrosswise; any way at all save parallel, and anyhow but straight. Between them lies always a maze of passages, and alleys, deep-sided, narrow, overhung by trellised windows and loopholed walls and guarded stairways.

For every square inch where the sun can shine, there are a hundred where a man could hide unseen. Through century piled on suspicious century, no designer, no architect, no builder has neglected to provide a means of secret ingress, and still more secret egress, to each new house. And the newest house is built on secret passages that hid conspirators against the kings of men who lived before the oldest house was thought of.

After the Mutiny of '57 came broader roads—so that a cannon might be trained along them.

But in '57, Jailpore was a nest of winding alleyways and blind bat and rat holes, where weird smells and strange unlisted poisons and prophecies were born. In its midst, tight-packed in a roaring babel-din of many-colored markets, stood a stone-walled palace, built once by a Hindu king to commemorate a victory over Moslems, added to by a Moslem Nizam, to celebrate his conquest of the Hindus and added to once again by the Honorable East India Company, to make a suitable barracks for its native troops.

From the rat-infested slums, from the hot shadows and the mazy back-bazaars, from temples, storehouses, shops, and from

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the sin-steeped underworld, there screamed and surged and swept the many-graded, many-minded polyglot rebellion-spume. A quarter of a million underdogs had turned against their masters. A hundred factions and as many more religions, all had one common end in view—to loot. All were agreed on one thing—that the first stage of the game must be to turn Jailpore and, after Jailpore, India, into a charnel-house.

Around and around the burning palace the mob screamed and swept uncontrolled. Moslem looted Hindu, and Hindu Moslem. Armed Sepoys, with the blood of their British officers fresh-soaked on their British uniforms, and the unspent pay of "John Company" still jingling in their pockets, danced weird, wild devil-dances through the streets, clearing their way, when they saw fit, with cold steel or wanton volleys. Women screamed. Caste looted caste. Loose horses galloped madly through the streets. Here and there a pitched battle raged, where a merchant who had wealth had also courage, and apprentices and friends to help him defend his store.

And through all the din and clamor, under and above the howling and the volleys and the roar of flames, sounded the steady thumping of the sacred war-drums. The whole sky glowed red. The Indian night was scorched and smoked and lit by arson. Hell screamed with the cooking of red mutiny, and throbbed with the thunder of the sacred temple-drums. And that was only one of the hells, and a small one. India glowed red that night from end to end!

JUGGUT KHAN, free-lance Rajput and gentleman of fortune, had ridden out of that caldron of Jailpore. His house was a heap of glowing ashes, and his goods were tossed for and distributed among a company. But his mark lay indelibly impressed upon the town. There were three European women and a child who were nowhere to be found; and there was a trail that led from somewhere near the palace to the western gate. It was a red trail.

In one spot lay a sepoy pierced through by a lance, and with half of the lance-shaft still standing upright in him. That had been bad art—sheer playing to the gallery! Juggut Khan had run him through and tried to lift him on the lance-end for a trophy. It was luck that saved the day for him that time, not swordsmanship.

But a man who has done what he had done that day may be forgiven. There lay nine other men behind him where his lance was left, and each of them lay face upward with a round red hole in his anatomy where the lance had entered.

And from the point where he had broken his lance and left it, up to where a self-appointed guard had refused at first to open the city gate for him, there was a trail that did honor to the man who taught him swordsmanship. One man lay headless, and another's head was only part of him, because the sword had split it down the middle and the two halves were still joined together at the neck.

There were men who claimed afterward that of the twenty-three who lay between his lance-shaft and the city-gate, some five or six had been slain in brawls and looting forays. And Juggut Khan was never known to discuss the matter. But the fact remains that every man of them was killed by the blade or point of a cavalry-saber, and that Juggut Khan broke out of the place untouched.

And another fact worthy of record is, that underneath a stone floor, in a building that was partly powder-magazine—surrounded at every end and side by mutineers who searched for them, and very nearly stifled by the dust of decaying ages—there lay three women and a child, with a jar of water close beside them and a sack of hastily collected things to eat. They lay there in all but furnace-heat, close-huddled in the darkness, and they shuddered and sobbed and blessed Juggut Khan alternately. Below them the whispering echoes sighed mysteriously through a maze of tunnels. Around them, and around their sack of food, the rats scampered. Above them, where a ten-ton stone trap-door lay closed over their heads, black powder stood in heaps and sacks and barrels. Closing the trap-door had been easy. One pushed it and it fell. Not all the mutineers in Jailpore nor Juggut Khan nor any one could open it again without the secret. And no man living knew the secret. The three women and the child were safe from immediate intrusion!

Those three women and that child were not so exceptionally placed for India, of that date. Two of the women had seen

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their husbands slain that afternoon, before their eyes. They were mother and daughter and grandson; and the fourth was an English nurse, red-cheeked still from the kiss of English Channel breezes.

"If only Bill were here!" the nurse wailed. "I know he'd find a way out. There wasn't never nothing nowhere that beat Bill. Bill wouldn't ha' left us! Bill'd ha' took us out o' here, an' saved our lives. Bill—snnff, snnff—Bill wouldn't ha'—snnff, snnff—shoved us in a rat-hole and took hisself off!"

She had not yet lost her English point of view. She still believed that the strong right arm of an English lover could play ducks and drakes with Destiny. One-half of the world, at least, still swears that she was wrong, and her mistress and the other woman thought her despicable, ridiculous, unenlightened. It was a hardship to them, to be endured with dignity and patience, but none the less a hardship, that they should be left and should have to die with this woman of the Ranks Below to keep them company. She was an honest woman, or they would never have engaged her and paid her passage all the way to India. But she was not of their *jat*, and she was a fool. It happens, however, that her point of view saved England for the English, and that the other point of view had brought England to the brink of utter ruin.

"If you'd leave off talking about your truly tiresome lover, and would pray to God, Jane," said Mrs. Acheson, "the rest of us might have a chance to pray to God too! This isn't the time, let me tell you, to be thinking of carnal love-affairs. Recall your sins, one by one, and ask forgiveness for them."

IN THE gloom of the vault, poor Jane was quite invisible. The sound of her snuffling and sobs was the only clue to her direction. But her bridling was a thing that could be felt through the stuffy blackness, and there was a ring in her retort that gave the lie to the tears that she was shedding.

"The only sin I ask forgiveness for," she answered in a level voice, "is having let Bill come to India alone. Pray to God, is it? Go on! Pray! If Bill was here, he'd start on that stone door without no words nor argument, unless some one tried to stop him. Then there'd be an argument! And he'd get it open too. Bill's the kind that does his prayin' afterward, and God helps men like Bill!"

"Well—I'm afraid that your Bill isn't here, and can't get here. So the best thing that you can do is to pray and let us pray."

"I'll pray for Bill!" said Jane defiantly. "Bill don't know that I'm in India, and he surely doesn't know I'm here. But if he knew—— Oh, God! Let him know! Tell him! He'd come so quick. He'd—snnff, snnff—he'd—why, he'd ha' been here long ago! Dear God, tell Bill I'm here, that's all!"

CHAPTER V

A GENERAL OFFICER IS FACED WITH THE CHOICE OF THREE PLANS

GENERAL BAINES was in a position to be envied. No soldier worthy of his salt is other than elated at the thought of war. Now for the proving of his theories. Now for the fruit of all his tireless preaching and inspection and preparing—the planned, pegged-out swoop to victory!

He knew—as few men in India knew—the length and the breadth of what was coming. And when two of his non-commissioned officers sent in word that the whole country was ablaze, he realized, as few other men did in that minute, that this was no local outbreak. The long-threatened holocaust had come, and he had to act, to smite, to strike sure and swift at the festering root of things, or Central India was lost.

But his hands were tied still. He knew. He could see. He could feel. He could hear. But he had his orders. That very morning they had been repeated to him, and with emphasis. In a letter from the Council he had been told that "slight disturbances, of a purely local character, were not without the bounds of possibility, due partly to religious unrest and partly to local causes. Under no circumstances were any extended reprisals to be undertaken until further orders, and generals commanding districts were required to keep the bulk of their commands within cantonments."

The countryside was up. All India probably was up. His own men, set by himself to watch with one definite idea, had confirmed his worst fears. And he was under orders to stay with the bulk of his command in Bholat! Corked up in cantonments, with three thousand first-class fighting-men squealing for trouble, and red

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rebellion running riot all around him though it might be quelled by instant action!

AND then worse happened. Juggut Khan clattered in to Bholat, spurring a horse that was so spent it could barely keep its feet. It fell in a woful heap outside the General's quarters, and Juggut Khan—all but as weary as the horse—swung himself free, staggered past the sentry at the door and rapped with his hilt on the tough teak panel. They had to give him brandy and feed him before he could summon strength enough to tell what he had seen and heard and done.

"And Brown stayed on at the cross-roads?"

"Aye, General sahib! He stayed!"

The General sat back and drummed his heels together on the floor in a way that his aides had come to recognize as meaning trouble.

"You say that all of the European officers in Jailpore have been killed?"

"I did not count. I did not even know them all by name or sight. I think, though, that all were killed. I heard men among the mutineers declare that all had been accounted for, save only three women and a child, and me. Those four I myself had hidden, and as for myself—I too was accounted for, and not without credit to the Raj for whom I fight!"

"I believe you, Juggut Khan! Did you have to cut your way out?"

The Rajput smiled.

"There was a message to deliver, sahib! What would you? Should I have waited while they arrested me?"

"Oh! You managed to evade them, did you?"

"At least I am here, sahib!"

The General chewed at his mustache, leaned his chair back against the wall and tapped at his boot with a riding-cane.

"Tell me, Juggut Khan," he said after another minute's thought, "what is your idea? Is this sporadic? Is this a local outbreak? Will this die down, if left to burn itself out?"

The Rajput laughed aloud.

"'Sporadic,'" he answered, "is a word of which I have yet to learn the meaning. If 'sporadic' means rebellion from Peshawur to Cape Cormorin—revolution, rape, massacre, arson, high treason, torture, death to every European and every half-breed and every loyal native north, south, east and west—then, yes, General sahib, 'sporadic' would be the proper word. If your honor should mean less than that, then some other word is needed!"

"Then you confirm my own opinion. You are inclined to think that this is an organized and country-wide rebellion?"

"I *know* of what I speak, sahib!"

"You don't think that you are being influenced in your opinion by the fact that you have seen a massacre, and have lost everything you had?"

"Nay, sahib! This is no hour for joking, or for bearing of false tidings. I tell you, *up*, sahib! Boots and saddles! Strike!"

The General chewed at his mustache another minute.

"You know this province well?" he asked.

"None better than I. I have traversed every yard of it, attending to my business."

"And your business is?"

"Each to his trade, sahib. My trade is honorable."

"I have good reasons for asking, and no impertinence is meant. Be good enough to tell me. I wish to know what value I may place on your opinion."

"Sahib, I am a full sergeant of the Rajput Horse, retired. I bear one medal."

"And——"

"I sell charms, sahib."

"What sort of charms?"

"All sorts. But principally charms against the evil eye, and the red sickness, and death by violence. But, also love-charms now and then, and now and then a death-charm to a man who has an enemy and lacks swordsmanship or courage. I trade with each and every man, sahib, and listen to the talk of each, and hold my tongue!"

"Strange trade for a soldier, isn't it?"

"Would you have me a robber, sahib? Or shall I sweep the streets—I, who have led a troop before now? Nay, sahib! A soldier can fight, and can do little else. When the day comes that the Raj has no more need of him—or thinks that it has no more need of him—he must either starve or become a prophet. And his own home is no place for a prophet who would turn his prophesying into silver coin!"

"Ah! Well—now, tell me! What is your opinion, without reference to what anybody else may think? You have just seen the massacre at Jailpore, and you know how

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many men I have here. And you know the condition of the road and the number of the mutineers. Would you, if you were in my place, strike at Jailpore immediately?"

"Nay, sahib. That I would not. I would strike north. And I would strike so swiftly that the mutineers would wonder whence I came. In Jailpore, all is over. They have done the harm, and they are in charge there. They have the powder-magazine in their possession, and the stands of arms, and the first advantage. Leave them there, then, sahib, and strike where you are not expected. In Jailpore you would be out of touch. You would have just that many more miles to march when the time comes—and it has come, sahib!—to join forces with the next command, and hit hard at the heart of things."

"And the heart of things is——"

"Delhi!"

"You display a quite amazing knowledge of the game."

"I am a soldier, sahib!"

"You would leave Jailpore, then, to its fate?"

"JAILPORE has already met its fate, sahib. The barracks are afire, and the city has been given over to be looted. Reckon no more with Jailpore! Reckon only of the others. Listen, sahib! Has any message come from the next command? No? Then why? Think you that even a local outbreak could occur without some message being sent to you, and to the next division south of you? Why has no message come? Where is the next command? The next command north? Harumpore? Then why is there no news from Harumpore? I will tell you, sahib."

"You mean, I suppose, that the country is up, in between?"

"You *know* that it is up, sahib!"

"You think that no message could get through to me?"

"I know that it could not! Else had one already come. My advice to you, sahib, as one soldier to another and tendered with all respect, is to up and leave this Bholat. Here, of what use are you? Here you can hold a small city, until the countryside has time to rise and lay siege to you and hem you in! Outside of here, you can be a hornet-storm! They will burn Bholat behind you. Let them! Let them, too, pay the price! Swoop down on Harumpore, sahib—join there with Kendrick sahib's command. There make a fresh plan, and swoop down on some other place. But move, sahib, and move quickly, and keep on moving! And waste no time on places that are already lost."

"Then you would have me leave those women and that child, that you tell me of to their fate?"

"Nay, sahib! I am not of your command. I have done my duty to the Raj, and I now go about my own business."

"And that is?"

"To repay a debt that I owe the Raj, sahib!"

"Your answers are rather unnecessarily evasive, Juggut Khan. Be good enough to explain yourself!"

"I ride back to Jailpore, sahib. I would have stayed there, but it seemed right and soldierly to bring through the news first. Now, I return to do what I may to rescue those whom I hid there. I owe that to the Raj!"

"You mean that you will ride alone?"

"At least half of the distance, sahib. I had a favor to ask."

"Well?"

"Are you marching north, sahib?"

"I have not determined yet."

"Determine, sahib! This is no hour for dallying! Give orders now! Up! Strike, sahib! Listen! Should you march on Jailpore, the mutineers, who far outnumber you, will learn beforehand of your coming, and will put the place in a state of defense. It may take you weeks to fight your way in! Leave Jailpore, and those who are left in it to me, and lend me that non-commissioned officer of yours who guards the cross-roads, and his twelve men. With a few, we can manage what a whole division might fail to do. And you march north, sahib, and burn and harry and slay! Strike quickly, where the trouble is yet brewing, and not where the day is lost already!"

It was case of the British power in India on one side of the scale, against three women and a child on the other; sentiment in the balance against strategy. And strategy must win, especially since this Rajput was offering his services.

"What are their names, you say?"

"Mrs. Leslie, wife of Captain Leslie; Mrs. Standish, wife of Colonel Standish and mother of Mrs. Leslie; Mrs. Leslie's child—

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I know not his name, he is but a child in arms—and the child's nurse."

The General still found it difficult to make up his mind.

"What proof have I of you?" he asked.

"Sahib, my honor is in question! I have a debt to pay!"

"What debt?"

"To the Raj."

"To the Raj?"

"Aye, sahib! I have but one son, and his life was saved for me by a British soldier. A life for a life. Four lives for a life. I ride! I need, though, a fresh horse. And I ask for the loan of that sergeant, and those twelve men."

"I wonder whether a man such as you can realize exactly what it means to us to know that white women are in Jailpore, at the mercy of black mutineers? I mean, are you sufficiently aware of the extreme horror of the situation?"

"Knew you Captain Collins sahib, of the Jailpore command?"

"Know him well."

"Knew you his memsahib?"

"She was a niece of mine."

"I slew her myself, with this sword!"

"When? Why?"

"Yesterday. Because her husband could not get to her himself, and since he and I knew each other, and he trusted me. I said to her, 'Memsahib! I have your husband's orders!' She asked me, 'What orders, Juggut Khan?' I said, 'Why ask me, Memsahib? Is my task easier, or yours?' She said 'Obey your orders, Juggut Khan, and accept my thanks now, since I shall be unable to thank you afterward!' And then she looked me bravely in the face, and met her death, sahib. Of a truth I know! I am to be trusted!"

"I believe you, Juggut Khan. And, incidentally, I beg your pardon for having doubted you. Have you slept?"

"Nay, sahib. And I sleep not on this side of the crossroads!"

"I don't place Sergeant Brown under your command—you'll understand that's impossible—but, it's quite impossible for him to catch me up. He may as well cooperate with you. Wait." He paused, and wrote, then continued, "Here is a note to him, in which I order him to work with you, and to take your advice whenever possible. Go to the stables, and choose any horse you like except my first charger. Here—here is money; you may need some. Count that, will you. How much is it? Four hundred rupees? Write out a receipt for it. Now, good luck to you, Juggut Khan. And if you *should* get through alive—I'll pay you the compliment of admitting that you won't come through without the women, and I know that Brown won't—if you should have luck, and should happen to get through, why, look for me at Harumpore, or somewhere to the northward of it. I start with my division in an hour."

"Salaam, sahib!" said the Rajput, rising and standing at the salute.

"Salaam, Juggut Khan! Take any food, or drink, or clothing that you want. Good-by, and your good luck ride with you. I feel like a murderer, but I know I've done the best that can be done!"

CHAPTER VI

A LONG TRAIL, AND A SLOW ONE, TO THE DUNGEON AT JAILPORE

NOW if Sergeant Brown possessed a sweetheart, and the sweetheart lived in England, and if Brown still loved her—as has already been more than hinted at—it is not at all unreasonable to wonder why he had no likeness of her, no news of her, nothing but her memory around which to weave the woof of sentiment—at least, it's not unreasonable so to wonder in this late year of grace.

Then, though, in 1857, when a newspaper cost threepence or thereabouts, and schools were so far from being free that only the sons of gentlemen (and seldom the daughters of even gentlemen, remember) attended them, the art of reading was not so common as it now is. Writing was still more uncommon. And it has not been pretended that Brown was other than a commoner. He was a stiff-backed man, and honest. And the pride that had raised him to the rank of sergeant was even stiffer than his stock. But he came from the ranks that owned no vote, nor little else, in those days, and he owned a sweetheart of the same rank as himself, who could neither read nor write. And when people whose somewhat primitive ideas on right and wrong lead them to look on daguerreotypes as works of the devil happen too to be living more than five thousand miles apart, when one of the two can not write, nor readily afford the

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cost of postage, and when the other is nearly always on the move from post to post, it is not exactly to be wondered at that memory of each other was all they had to dwell upon.

A journey to India in '57 meant, to the rank and file, oblivion and worse. There were men then, of course, just as there are now, who would leave a girl behind them tied fast by a promise of futile and endless devotion; men who knew what the girls did not know—that India was all but inaccessible to any one outside of Government employ, and that a common soldier's chance of sending for his girl, or of coming home again to claim her, was something in the neighborhood of one in thirty thousand.

But there were other men, like William Brown, who were a shade too honest and too stiff-chinned to buckle under to the social conditions of England in those days, and who were consequently not exactly pestered with offers of employment. And a man who could see the difference between doffing his ragged cap to a dissolute squire or parson, and saluting his better on parade, could also see the selfishness of leaving an honest girl to languish for him. Brown could not get a living in England. So he told his girl to get a better man, swung his canvas bag across his shoulder and marched away.

"What kind of a man is a better man than Bill?" she had wondered. Men like Bill seem to have a knack of judging character, and of picking girls who are as steadfast as themselves. So it is not to be wondered at that almost before her tears were dry she had set about attempting what few women of her type and time would have dreamed of. If Bill had set her free, she reasoned, Bill had no more authority over her, and she might do exactly what she chose. Bill could release her, but he could not make her take another man. So, for all that the local yeomen, and local tradesmen even, haunted the little cottage on the Downs, and pestered her with their attentions, no one supplanted Bill.

Bill could tell her—and had told her—that India was no country for a white woman; that there were snakes there, and black men and tigers and even worse. But, since he had set her free, if she could manage it she was quite at liberty to brave the tigers and the snakes. And, once there, she would see whether she was free or not, and whether Bill was, either!

IT TOOK Bill Brown six years of constant honest effort to become a sergeant. It took Jane Emmett six weeks of pride-consuming and vexatious vigilance to procure for herself a job as nurse in a soldier-family. And it took her six more years of unremitting diligence, sweetened by all the attributes that seem desirable when nursing other people's children and embittered by the shame of grudging patronage, before she was considered dependable enough to be recommended for the service of a family just leaving for Bengal. Then, however, her world was a real world again!

Five months on a sailing-ship around the Cape—deep-laden, gunwales awash in a beam-on Bay-of-Biscay "snorer," hove-to for a week off Cape Agulhas, while the clumsy brigantine rolled the masts loose in her, all but dismasted in a typhoon come astray from the China Sea, fed on moldy bread, and even moldier pork, with a fretful child to nurse, and an exacting mother to be pleased! Jane Emmett laughed at it. Bill had been there before her, and had done more on his way, and worse!

Bengal did not frighten her. Nor did the knowledge, when she reached it, that Bill was very likely still some hundreds of miles away. She, who had come five thousand miles as the crows are said to fly and nine thousand by the map, could manage the odd hundreds. And she could wait. She had waited six long years. What was another month or two?

She had not even a notion where Bill was, beyond a vague one that he belonged to another province. For when the Honorable East India Company was muddling the affairs of India, the honors and emoluments and privileges—such as they were!—were reserved for the benefit of the commissioned ranks.

So a transfer to Jailpore did not mean to Jane Emmett ten extra degrees of heat, the neighborhood of jungle-fever and a brand-new breed of smells. Those disadvantages, which weighted down the souls of her employers, were completely overshadowed, so far as she was concerned, by the knowledge that she was traveling nearer by a hundred leagues or so to where her Bill was stationed. She was going west;

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and somewhere to the west was Bill. Anything was good—fever, and prickly heat, and smells included—that brought her any nearer him.

There would be no sense in endeavoring to analyze her sensations when the sudden outburst overwhelmed the inner-guard at Jailpore. The sight of white women being butchered, and of white men with the blood of their own women on their hands, selling their lives as dearly as the God of War would let them in a holocaust of flames, blinded her. It was probably just a splurge of fire and noise and smoke and blood in her memory, with one or two details standing out. The only real sensation that she felt—even when a tall, lean Rajput flung her across his shoulder, ran with her and dropped her down through a square hole into stifling darkness—was a longing for Bill Brown, her Bill, the one man in the world who could surely stop the butchery.

The others prayed. But she refused to pray. She felt angry—not prayerful! Had she come nine thousand miles, and sacrificed six good years of youth and youth's heritage, to be cast into a reeking dungeon and left to die there in the dark? Not if Bill should know of it! And so she changed her argument, and prayed for Bill. If only Bill knew—straight-backed, honest, stiff-chinned, uncompromising, plain Bill Brown. He would change things!

"Oh, Bill! Bill! Bill!" she sobbed. "Dear God, bring Bill to me!"

CHAPTER VII

BROWN PROVES ONE OF HIS PET THEORIES CORRECT

WHEN a man knows what is out against him, and from which direction he may look to meet death, he only needs to be a very ordinary man to make at least a gallant showing. Gallery or no gallery to watch, given responsibility and trained men under him, not one man in a thousand will fail to face death with dignity.

But Brown knew practically nothing, and understood still less, of what was happening. He had Juggut Khan's word for it that Jailpore was in flames, and that all save four of its European population had been killed. He believed that to be a probably exaggerated statement of affairs, but he did not blink the fact that he might expect to be overwhelmed almost without notice, and at any minute. That was a fact which he accepted, for the sake of argument and as a working-basis on which to build a plan of some kind. His orders were to hold that post, and he would hold it until relieved by General Baines or death. But there are several ways of holding a hot coal besides the rather obvious one of sitting on it.

It would have been a fine chance to be theatrical, had play-acting been in his line. Many and many a full-blown general has risen to authority and fame by means of absolutely useless gallery-play. He believed that he would presently be relieved by General Baines, who he felt sure would march at once on Jailpore; and had he chosen to he could have addressed the men, have set them to throwing up defenses and have made a nice theatrical redoubt that he could have held quite easily with the help of nine men for a day or two. And since the really worth-while things go often unrewarded, but the gallery-plays never, nobody would have blamed him had he chosen some such course as that.

But Brown's idea of holding down a place was to make that place a thorn in the side of the enemy. And since he did not know who was the enemy, or where he was, nor why he was an enemy, nor when he would attack, he proposed to find out these things for himself preparatory to making the said enemy as uncomfortable as his meager resources would permit, when eked out by an honest "dogged-does-it" brain.

HE BURIED the three men whom Fate had seemed to value at the price of a fakir's freedom. And, being a religious man, to whom religion was a fact and the rest of the universe a theory, he was able to say a full funeral service over them from memory. He said it at the grave-end, with a lantern in his hand and one man facing him across the grave—as the English used to drink when the Danes had landed, each watching for the glint of steel beyond the other's shoulder.

And, four on each side of the trench that they had dug, the remainder knelt and faced the night each way—partly from enforced piety, and partly because eight men back to back, with their bayonets outward and their butts against their knees, are an

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awkward proposition for an enemy. They mumbled the responses because Brown made them do it, and they kept their eyes skinned because the night seemed full of other eyes, and sounds.

"And now, you men," said Brown, changing his voice to suit the nature of his task, "you can get your sleep by fours. I don't care which four of you goes to sleep first, but there are only two watches of us left, and there are about four hours left to sleep in, by my reckoning. That's two hours' sleep for each man. And we'll keep clear of the guard-room. As I understand my orders, the important point's the crossroads. I'm supposed to halt every one who comes, and to ask him his business. And that'd be impossible to do from the guard-room here. Let this be a lesson to you men, now. In interpretin' orders, when a point's in doubt, always look for the meaning of the orders rather than the letter of them, obeying the letter only when the meaning and the letter are the same thing. The letter of our orders says the guard-room. The meaning's clear. We're here to guard the crossroads. We take the meaning, and let the letter hang!

"Besides! The way it seems to me, if there's any more trouble cooking in this neighborhood, it's going to cook pretty fast, and it's going to boil around that guard-room; and if we're not in the guard-room, why, that's point number one for us! Leave the guard-room lantern lighted, and bring out nothing but your cartridge-pouches and the box of ammunition. Leave everything else where it lies. Quick, now."

THEY obeyed him on the run, afraid to be out of his sight for a moment even, trusting him as little children trust a nurse, and ready to do anything so long as he would only keep them up and doing, and not make them stay by the scene of the murders. Brown knew their state of mind as accurately as he knew the range of their service rifles, and he knew just how he could best keep panic from them. He knew too, if not what was best to do, at least what he intended doing, and he knew how he could best get them in a state to do it.

Behind his own mind lay all the while a sense of loneliness and hopelessness. He did not entertain the thought of failure to hold the crossroads, and he was so certain that General Baines would come with his division that he could almost see the advance-guard trotting toward him down the trunk road. But there is no accounting for a soldier's moods, and something told him —something deep down inside him that he could neither name nor understand—that he was out now on the adventure of a lifetime, and that the heart-cord which had held him tight to England all these years had been cut. He felt gloomy and dispirited, but not a man of the nine who followed him had the slightest inkling of it.

He halted them outside the guard-room, and bullydamned two of them because some unimportant part of their accouterments was missing; and he "'Tshuned" them, and stood them at ease, and "'Tshuned" them again, until he had them jumping at the word. Then he marched them two abreast in and out among the huts in search of any sign of native servants. They found no sign of any one at all. Though in that black darkness it would have been quite possible for half a hundred men to lie undetected, Brown decided that the camp was empty. He thought it probable that any one concealed there would have tried his luck on somebody at least, at close range as he passed.

So he marched them back to the guard-room once again, and sent two of them in to drag out the shivering Beluchi, who had taken cover underneath a cot and refused to come out until he was dragged out by the leg. The native's terror served to pull the men together quite a little, for Tommy Atkins always does and always did behave himself with pride when what he is pleased to consider his inferiors are anywhere about. They showed that unfortunate Beluchi how white men marched into the darkness—best foot foremost, without halt or hesitation, when ghosts or murderers or unseen marksmen were close at hand.

The Beluchi let himself be dragged, trembling, between two of them. It was he who first saw something move, or heard some one breathe. For he was absolutely on edge, and had nothing to attend to but his own fear. The others had to keep both eyes and ears lifting, to please Brown the exacting. The Beluchi struggled and held back, almost breaking loose, and actually tearing his loin-cloth.

"Sahib!" he whispered hoarsely. "Sahib!"

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"What is it?" demanded Brown, scarcely waiting for an answer, though. Something told him what it was that moved, and his own skin felt goose-fleshy from neck to heel.

"The fakir, sahib!"

There was a murmur through the ranks, a sibilant indrawing of the breath.

"Did I hear anybody swear?" asked Brown.

Nobody answered him. All nine men stood stock-still, leaning on their rifles, their heads craned forward and their eyes strained in the direction of the gloomy baobab.

"Form single rank!" commanded Brown.

There was no response. They stood there fixed like a row of chickens staring at a snake!

"Form single rank!"

He leaped at them, and broke the first rule of the service—as a man may when he is man enough, and the alternative would be black shame.

His fist was a hard one and heavy, and they felt the weight of it.

"Form single rank! Take one pace open order! Extend! Now, forward—by the right! Right dress, there!"

He marched in front of them, and they followed him for very shame, now that he had broken their paralysis.

"Halt! Port—arms! Charge bayonets!"

He was peering at something in the dark, something that chuckled and smelled horrible, and sat unusually still for anything that lived.

"Numbers One, Two, Three—left wheel—forward! Halt! Numbers Seven, Eight, Nine—right wheel—forward! Halt!"

They were standing now on three sides of a square. The fourth side was the trunk of the baobab. Between them and the trunk, the streaming tendrils swayed and swung, bats flitted and something still invisible sat still and chuckled.

"One pace forward—march!"

THEY could see now. The fakir sat and stared at them and grinned. Brown raised the lamp and let its rays fall on him. The light glinted off his eyes, and off the only other part of him that shone—the long, curved, ghastly finger-nails that had grown through the palm of his upstretched hand.

"How did you get here?" demanded Brown, not afraid to speak, for fear that fright would take possession of himself as well as of his men, but quite well aware that the fakir would not answer him. Then he remembered the Beluchi.

"Ask him, you! Ask him how he came here."

The Beluchi found his tongue, and stammered out a question. The fakir chuckled, and following his chuckle let a guttural remark escape him.

"He says, sahib, that he flew!"

"Ask him, could he fly with nine fixed bayonets in him!"

There was a little laughter from the men at that sally. It takes very little in the way of humor to dispel a sense of the uncanny or mysterious.

"He answers, sahib, that you have seen what comes of striking him. He asks how many dead there be."

"Does he want me to hold him answerable for those men's lives?"

"He says he cares not, sahib! He says that he has promised what shall befall you, sahib, before a day is past—you and one other!"

"Ask him, where is the Punjabi skin-buyer?"

The fakir chuckled at that question, and let out suddenly a long, low, hollow-sounding howl, like a she-wolf's just at sundown. He was answered by another howl from near the guard-room, and every soldier faced about as though a wasp had stung him.

"Front!" commanded Brown. "Now, one of you, about turn! Keep watch that way! Is that the Punjabi? ask him."

"He says 'Yes!' sahib. He and others!"

"Very well. Now tell him that unless he obeys my orders on the jump, word for word as I give them, I'll hang him as high as Haman by that withered arm of his, and have him beaten on the toe-nails with a cleaning-rod before I fill him so full of bayonet-holes that the vultures'll take him for a sponge! Say I'm a man of my word, and don't exaggerate."

The Beluchi translated.

"He says you dare not, sahib!"

"Advise him to talk sense."

"He says, sahib, 'You have had one lesson!' "

"Now it's my turn to give him one. Men! We'll have to give up that sleep I talked about. This limping dummy of a fakir thinks he's got us frightened, and

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we've got to teach him different! There's some reason why we're not being attacked as yet. There's something fishy going on, and this swab's at the bottom of it! We want him, too, on a charge of murder, or instigating murder, and the guard-room's the best place for him. To the guard-room with him. He'll do for a hostage anyhow. And where he is, I've a notion that the control of this treachery won't be far away! Grab him below the arms and by the legs. One of you hold a bayonet-point against his ribs. The rest, face each way on guard. Now—all together, forward to the guard-room—march!"

The fakir howled. Ululating howls replied from the surrounding night, and once a red light showed for a second and disappeared in front of them. Then the fakir howled again.

"Look, sahib! See! The guard-room!"

It was the Beluchi who saw it first—the one who was most afraid of things in general and the least afraid of Sergeant Brown. A little flame had started in the thatch.

"HALT!" ordered Brown. "Two of you hold the fakir! The remainder — volley-firing — kneeling — point-blank-range. Ready—as you were—independent firing—ready! Now, wait till you see 'em in the firelight, then blaze away all you like!"

His last words were cut off short by the sound of rifle-fire. Each rifle in turn barked out, and three rifles answered from the night.

"Let that fakir feel a bayonet-point, somebody!"

The fakir cursed between his teeth, in proof of prompt obedience by one of the men who held him.

"Tell him to order his crowd to cease fire!"

The Beluchi translated, and the fakir howled again. The flames leaped through the thatch, and in a minute more the countryside was lit for half a mile or more by the glare of the burning guard-room.

The flames betrayed more than a hundred turbaned men, who hugged the shadows.

"Keep that bayonet-point against his ribs. See? That comes o' moving instead o' sitting still! If we'd shut ourselves in the guard-room there, we'd have been merrily roasting in there now! We stole a march on them. Beauty here was sitting on his throne to see the fun. Didn't expect us. Thought we'd be all hiding under the beds, like Sidiki here! Goes to prove the worst thing that a soldier can do is to sit still when there's trouble. We're better off than ever. We're free and they won't dare do much to us as long as we've got Sacred-Smells-and-Stinks in charge. Form up round him, men, and keep your eyes skinned till morning!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE MUTINEERS WASTE VALUABLE TIME

OF COURSE, discussing matters in the light of history, with full and intimate knowledge of everything that had a bearing on the Mutiny, there are plenty of club-armchair critics who maintain that England could not do otherwise than win in '57. They always do say that afterward of the side that won the day.

But then, with history yet to make, things looked very different, and nobody pretended that there was any certainty of anything except a victory for the mutineers. All that either side recognized as likely to reverse conditions was the notorious ability that a beaten and cornered British army has for upsetting certainties. So the rebels had more than a little argument as to what steps should be taken next, once the initial butchery and loot had taken place.

For instance, in Jailpore:

More than a hundred fakirs and wandering priests and mendicants had sent in word that the province from end to end was ready, and that the British slept. But there were those in Jailpore who distrusted fakirs and religious votaries of every kind. They believed them fully capable of rousing the countryside, of working on the religious feelings of the unsophisticated rustics and setting them to murdering and plundering right and left. But they doubted their ability to judge of the army's sleepiness. These doubters were the older men, who had had experience of England's craft in war. They knew of the ability of some at least of England's generals to match guile against guile, and back up guile with swift, unexpected hammer-strokes.

There were men who claimed that what had happened in Jailpore would be repeat-

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ed in Bholat and elsewhere. There was no need, these maintained, to march and join hands with other rebels. Each unit was sufficient to itself. Each city would be a British funeral pyre. Why march?

Some said "The General at Bholat will learn of the massacre, and will learn too, that not quite all were killed. He will come hotfoot to find the four we could not find. For these British are as cobras; slay the he cobra and the she one comes to seek revenge. Slay the she one and beware! Her husband will track thee down, and strike thee. They are not ordinary folk!"

There were other factions that maintained that General Baines was strong enough, with his three thousand, to hold Bholat, unless the men of Jailpore marched to join hands with the Bholatis—who were surely in revolt by this time. There were others who declared that he would leave Bholat and Jailpore to their fates without any doubt at all, and would march to join hands with the nearest contingent, at Harumpore.

The bolder spirits of this latter faction were for setting off at once to prevent this combination. For a little while their arguments almost prevailed.

But another faction yet, and an even more numerous one, insisted it were best to wait for news from other centers.

Why march, they argued, why strike, why run unnecessary risks, before they knew what was happening elsewhere?

"Surely," these argued, "the English will hear that four here are still unaccounted for. Some attempt will be made to find and rescue them. But if we find and slay them, and send their heads to Bholat, then will the English know that they are indeed dead. Then there will be no attempt at rescue, and we shall hold Jailpore unmolested as headquarters."

That piece of logic won the day for a while, and parties were made up to explore the place, and search in every nook and cranny for the three women and a child who surely had not passed out through any of the gates, and who were therefore just as surely in the city. A reward was offered by the committee of rebel-leaders and, although nobody believed that the reward would actually be paid, the opportunities for looting privately while searching were so great that the search was thorough.

It failed, though, for the very simple reason that nobody suspected that the huge stone trap-door in the floor of the powder-magazine had ever been opened, or ever could be opened. The magazine had been a white man's watch. White men had kept guard over it for more than a hundred years, and the natives had forgotten that a maze of tunnels and caverns lay beneath it.

SO, WHILE bayonet-points and swords were pushed into crevices, while smoke was sent down passages and tunnels and great, loose-limbed, slobbering hounds were led on the leash and cast to find a trail, the three women and the child lay still beneath the piled-up powder, and doled out water, and biscuit in siege-time measures. They lay in pitch-darkness, in a vault where not even a sound could reach them, except the whispered echo of their own voices and the scampering of the rats. They were growing nearly blind, and nearly crazed, with the darkness and the silence and the fear.

Every second they expected to see daylight through the cracks above, as rebels levered up the door, or to hear feet and voices coming through the vaults below, for doubtless the vaults led somewhere. But for their fear of snakes and rats and unknown horrors, they would have tried to find a way through the vaults themselves. But as each movement that they made, and each word that they spoke, sent echoes reverberating through the gloom, they lay still and shuddered.

Once they heard footsteps on the stone flags overhead. But the footsteps went away again, and then all was still. Soon they lost all count of time. They were only aware of heat and discomfort and fear and utter weariness.

One woman and an infant wept. One woman prayed aloud incessantly. The third woman—the menial, the worst educated and least enlightened of the three, according to the others' notion of it—stubbornly refused to admit that there was not some human means of rescue.

"If Bill were here," she kept on grumbling, "Bill'd find a way!"

And in the darkness that surrounded her she felt that she could see Bill's face, as she remembered it—red-cheeked and clean-shaven—six years or more ago.

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CHAPTER IX

EVEN A FAKIR PROVES NOT WITHOUT HIS USES

THE blazing roof of the guard-room lit up even the crossroads for a while, and Brown and his men could see that for the present there was a good wide open space between them and the enemy. The fire-light showed a tree not far from the cross-roads, and since anything is cover to men who are surrounded and outnumbered, they made for that tree with one accord, and without a word from Brown.

"We've all the luck," said Brown. "There's not a detachment of any other army in the world would walk straight on to a find like this!"

He held up one frayed end of a manila rope, that was wound around the tree trunk. Some tethered ox had rendered them that service.

"Fifty feet of good manila, and a fakir that needs hanging! Anybody see the connection?"

There was a chorus of ready laughter, and the two men who had the unenviable task of carrying the fakir picked him up and tossed him to the tree-trunk. The roof of the guard-house was blazing fiercely, and now they had fired the other roofs. The fakir, the tree and the little bunch of men who held him prisoner were as plainly visible as though it had been daytime. A bullet pinged past Brown's ear, and buried itself in the tree-trunk with a thud.

"Let him feel that bayonet again!" said Brown.

A rifleman obeyed, and the fakir howled aloud. An answering howl from somewhere beyond the dancing shadows told that the fakir had been understood.

"And now," said Brown, paraphrasing the well-remembered wording of the drill-book, in another effort to get his men to laughing again, "when hanging a fakir by numbers—at the word one, place the noose smartly round the fakir's neck. At the word two, the right-hand man takes the bight of the rope in the hollow of his left hand, and climbs the tree, waiting on the first branch suitable for the last sound of the word three. At the last sound of the word three, he slips the rope smartly over the bough of the tree and descends smartly to the ground, landing on the balls of his feet and coming to attention. At the word four, the remainder seize the loose end of the rope, being careful to hold it in such a way that the fakir has a chance to breathe. And at the last sound of the word five, you haul all together, lifting the fakir off the ground, and keeping him so until ordered to release. Now—one!"

He had tied a noose while he was speaking, and the fakir had watched him with eyes that blazed with hate. A soldier seized the noose, and slipped it over the fakir's head.

"Two!"

The tree was an easy one to climb. "Two" and "three" were the work of not more than a minute.

"Four!" commanded Brown, and the rope drew tight across the bough. The fakir had to strain his chin upward in order to draw his breath.

"Steady, now!"

The men were lined out in single file, each with his two hands on the rope. Not half of them were really needed to lift such a wizened load as the fakir, but Brown was doing nothing without thought, and wasting not an effort. He wanted each man to be occupied, and even amused. He wanted the audience, whom he could not see, but who he knew were all around him in the shadows, to get a full view of what was happening. They might not have seen so clearly, had he allowed one-half of the men to be lookers-on.

"Steady!" he repeated. "Be sure and let him breathe, until I give the word." Then he seized the cowering Beluchi by the neck, and dragged him up close beside the fakir. "Translate, you!" he ordered. "To the crowd out yonder first. Shout to 'em, and be careful to make no mistakes."

"Speak, then, sahib! What shall I say?"

"Say this. This most sacred person here is our prisoner. He will die the moment any one attempts to rescue him."

The Beluchi translated, and repeated word for word.

"I will now talk with him, and he himself will talk with you, and thus we will come to an arrangement!"

There was a commotion in the shadows, and somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty men appeared, keeping at a safe distance still, but evidently anxious to get nearer.

"Now talk to the fakir, and not so loud-

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ly! Ask him 'Are you a sacred person?' Ask him softly, now!"

"He says 'Yes,' sahib, 'I am sacred!' "

"Do you want to die?"

"All men must die!"

The answer made an opening for an interminable discussion, of the kind that fakirs and their kindred love. But Brown was not bent just then on dissertation. He changed his tactics.

"Do you want to die, a little slowly, before all those obedient worshipers of yours, and in such a way that they will see and understand that you can not help yourself, and therefore are a fraud?"

The Beluchi repeated the question in the guttural tongue that apparently the fakir best understood. In the fitful light cast by the burning roofs, it was evident that the fakir had been touched in the one weak spot of his armor.

There can scarcely be more than one reason why a man should torture himself and starve himself and maim and desecrate and horribly defile himself. At first sight, the reason sounds improbable, but consideration will confirm it. It is vanity, of an iron-bound kind, that makes the wandering fakir.

"Ask him again!" said Brown.

But again the fakir did not answer.

"Tell him that I'm going to let him save his face, provided he saves mine. Explain that I, too, have men who think I am something more than human!"

The Beluchi interpreted, and Brown thought that the fakir's eyes gleamed with something rather more than their ordinary baleful light. It might have been the dancing flames that lit them, but Brown was something of an optimist. He thought that the fakir was seeing the dawning light of reason.

"SAY that if I let my men kill him, my men will believe me superhuman, and his men will know that he is only a man with a withered arm! But tell him this: He's got the best chance he ever had to perform a miracle, and have the whole of this province believe in him forevermore!"

Again the fakir's eyes took on a keener than usual glare, as he listened to the Beluchi. He did not nod, though, and he made no other sign, beyond the involuntary evidence of understanding that his eyes betrayed.

"His men can see that noose round his neck, tell him. And his men know me, more or less, and British methods anyhow. They believe now, they're sure, they're positive that his neck's got about as much chance of escaping from that noose as a blind cow has of running from a tiger. Now then! Tell him this. Let him come the heavy fakir all he likes. Tell him to tell his gang that he's going to give an order. Let him tell them that when he says 'Hookum hai!' my men'll loose his neck straight away, and fall down flat. Only, first of all he's got to tell them that he needs us for the present. Let him say that he's got an extra-special awful death in store for us by and by, and that he's going to keep us by him until he's ready to work the miracle. Meantime, nobody's to touch us, or come near us, except to bring him and us food!"

The fakir listened, and said nothing. At a sign from Brown the rope tightened just a little. The fakir raised his chin.

"And tell him that, if he doesn't do what I say, and exactly what I say, and do it now, he's got just so long to live as it takes a man to choke his soul out!"

The fakir answered nothing.

"Just ever such a wee bit tighter, men!"

The fakir lost his balance, and had to scramble to his feet and stand there swaying on his heels, clutching at the rope above him with his one uninjured hand, and sawing upward with his head for air. There came a murmur from the shadows, and a dozen breech-bolts clicked. There seemed no disposition to lie idle while the holiest thing in a temple-ridden province dangled in mid-air.

"In case of a rush," said Brown quietly, "all but two of you let go! The remainder seize your rifles and fire independently. The two men on the rope, haul taut, and make fast to the tree-trunk. This tree's as good a place to die as anywhere, but he dies first! Understand?"

The fakir rolled his eyes, and tried to make some sort of signal with his free arm.

"Just a wee shade tighter!" ordered Brown. "I'm not sure, but I think he's seeing reason!"

The fakir gurgled. No one but a native, and he a wise one, could have recognized a meaning in the guttural gasp that he let escape him.

"He says 'All right! sahib!' " translated the Beluchi.

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"Good!" said Brown. "Ease away on the rope, men! And now! You all heard what I told him. If he says 'Hookum hai!' you all let go the rope, and fall flat. But keep hold of your rifles!"

The fakir's voice rose in a high-pitched, nasal wail, and from the darkness all around them there came an answering murmur that was like the whispering of wind through trees. By the sound, there must have been a crowd of more than a hundred there, and either the crowd was sneaking around them to surround them at close quarters, or else the crowd was growing.

"Keep awake, men!" cautioned Brown.

"Aye, aye, sir! All awake, sir!"

"Listen, now! And if he says one word except what I told him he might say, tip me the wink at once!"

Brown swung the Beluchi out in front of him where he could hear the fakir better.

"I'll hang you, remember, after I've hanged him, if anything goes wrong!"

"He is saying, sahib, exactly what you said."

"He'd better! Listen now! Listen carefully! Look out for tricks!"

The fakir paused a second from his high-pitched monologue, and a murmur from the darkness answered him.

"Stand by to haul tight, you men!"

"All ready, sir!"

The rope tightened just a little—just sufficiently to keep the fakir cognizant of its position. The fakir howled out a sort of singsong dirge, which plainly had imperatives in every line of it. At each short pause for breath he added something in an undertone that made the Beluchi strain his ears.

"He says, sahib, that they understand. He says, 'Now is the time!' He says now he will order 'Hookum hai!' He says, 'Are you ready?' He says, sahib,—he says it, sahib, not I!—he says, 'Thou art a fool to stare thus! Thou and thy men are fools! Stare, instead, as men who are bewitched!'"

"Try and look like boiled owls, to oblige his Highness, men!" said Brown. "Now, that's better; watch for the word! Easy on the rope a little!"

The men did their best to pose for the part of semimesmerized victims of a superhuman power. The flame from the burning roofs was dying down already, for the thatch burned fast, and the glowing gloom was deep enough to hide indifferent acting. With their lives at stake, though, men act better than they might at other times.

THE fakir spun round on his heels and, clutching with his whole hand at the rope, began to execute a sort of dance—a weird, fantastic, horrible affair of quivering limbs and rolling eyeballs, topped by a withered arm that pointed upward, and a tortured finger-nail-pierced fist that nodded on a dried-out wrist-joint.

"Hookum hai!" he screamed suddenly, waving his sound hand upward, and bringing it down suddenly with a jerk, as though by sheer force he was blasting them.

"Down with you!" ordered Brown, and all except Brown and the Beluchi tumbled over backward.

"Keep hold of your rifles!" ordered Brown.

The fakir's wailing continued for a while. With his own hand he took the noose from his neck and, now that the flames had died away to nothing but spasmodic spurts above a dull red underglow, there was no one in the watching ring who could see Brown's sword-point. Only Brown and the fakir knew that it was scratching at the skin between the fakir's shoulder-blades.

"It is done!" said the fakir presently. "Now take me back to my dais again!" And the Beluchi translated.

"I'd like to hear their trigger-springs released," suggested Brown. "This has all been a shade too slick for me. I've got my doubts yet about it's being done. Tell him to order them to uncock their rifles, so that I can hear them do it."

"He says that they are gone already!" translated the Beluchi.

"Tell him I don't believe it!" answered Brown, whose eyes were straining to pierce the darkness, which was blacker than the pit again by now.

The fakir raised his voice into a howl—a long, low, ululating howl like that he had uttered when they found him on his dais. From the distance, beyond the range of rifles, came a hundred answering howls. The fakir waited, and a minute later a hundred howls were raised again, this time from an even greater distance.

Then he spoke.

"He says that they are gone," translated the Beluchi. "He says he will go back to his dais again."

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"'Tshun!" ordered Brown. "Now, men, just because we've saved our skins so far is no reason why we should neglect precautions. We're going to put this imitation angel back on his throne again, so the same two carry him that brought him here. There's no sense in giving two more men the itch, and all the other ailments the brute suffers from! Form up round him, the rest. Take open order—say two paces—and go slow. Feel your way with your fixed bayonet, and don't take a step in the dark until you're sure where it will lead you. Forward—march! One of you bring that rope along."

THE weird procession crawled and crept and sidled back to where it had started from not so long before—jumping at every sound, and at every shadow that showed deeper than the coal-black night around them. It took them fifteen minutes to recross a hundred yards. But when they reached the earthen throne again at last, and had hoisted the fakir back in position on it, there had been no casualties, and the morale of the men in Sergeant Brown's command was as good again as the breech-mechanism of the rifles in his charge.

They were scarcely visible to him or one another in the blackness, but he sensed the change in them, and changed his own tune to fit the changed condition.

His voice had nothing in it but the abrupt military explosion when he gave his orders now—no argument, no underlying sympathy. He was no longer herding a flock of frightened children. He was ordering trained, grown men, and he knew it and they knew it. The orders ripped out, like the crack of a drover's whip.

"Fall in, now, properly! 'Tshun! Right dress! To two paces—open order—from the center—extend! Now, then! Left and right wings—last three at each end forward—right wheel—halt! That's it. 'Bout face. Now each man keep two eyes lifting till the morning. If anything shows up, or any of you hear a sound, shoot first and challenge afterward!"

They were standing so when the pale sun greeted them, in hollow square, with their backs toward the fakir, who was squatting, staring straight in front of him, on his dais, with his back turned to the tree and his withered arm still pointing up to heaven like a dead man's calling to the gods for vengeance.

A little later, Brown made each alternate man lie down and get what sleep he could just where he was, with a comrade standing over him. He himself slept so for a little while. But one of the men heard something move among the hanging tendrils of the baobab, investigated with his bayonet-point, and managed to transfix a twelve-foot python. After that there was not so much desire for sleep. The fakir either slept with his eyes open or else dispensed with sleep. No one seemed able to determine which.

When the day grew hotter, and the utterly remorseless Indian sun bore down on them, and on the aching desolation of the plain and the burnt-out guard-house, the fakir still sat unblinking, gazing straight out in front of him, with eyes that hated but did nothing else. He seemed to have no time nor thought nor care for anything but hate and the expression of it.

At noon, three little children came to him, and brought him water in a small brass bowl, and cooked-up vegetables wrapped in some kind of leaf. Brown let him have them, and bribed the frightened children to go and bring water for the men and himself. He gave them the unheard-of wealth of one rupee between them, and they went off with it—and did not come back.

Meanwhile the fakir had drunk his water, and had poured out what was left. He had also eaten what the children had brought him, and suddenly, from vacant, implacable hatred, he woke up and began to be amused.

"Ha-ha!" he laughed at them. "Ho-ho!" And then he launched out with a string of eloquence that Brown called on the Beluchi to translate.

"Who said there would be thirst, and the sound of water! Is there a thirst? Who spoke of an ant-hill and of hungry ants and raw red openings in the flesh for the little ants to run in and out more easily?"

The Beluchi translated faithfully, and the men all listened.

"Tell him to hold his tongue!" growled Brown at last.

"Ha-ha! Ho-ho-ho!" laughed the fakir. "The heat grows great, and the tongues grow dry, and none bring water! Ho-ho! But I told them that I needed these for a deadlier death than any they devised! Ho-

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ho-ho-ho! Look at the little crows, how they wait in the branches! Ha-ha-ha-ha! See how the kites come! Where are the vultures? Wait! What speck sails in the sky there? Even the vultures come! Ho-ho-ho-ho!"

"I hear a horse, sir!" said one of the men who watched.

"I heard it more than a minute ago," said Brown.

The fakir stopped his mockery, and even he listened.

"Ask him," said Brown, "where are the men who set fire to the guard-room?"

"He says they are in the village, waiting till he sends for them!" said the Beluchi.

"Keep an eye lifting, you men," ordered Brown. "This'll be a messenger from Bholat, ten to one. Mind they don't ambush him! Watch every way at once, and shoot at anything that moves!"

"CLIPPETY - clippety - clippety - cloppety——"

The sound of a galloping horse grew nearer; a horse hard-ridden, that was none the less sure-footed still, and going strong in spite of sun and heat. Suddenly a foam-flecked black mare swung round a bend between two banks, and the sun shone on a polished saber-hilt. A turbaned Rajput rose in his stirrups, gazed left and right and then in front of him—from the burned-out guard-house to the baobab—drew rein to a walk and waved his hand.

"By all that's good and great and wonderful," said Brown aloud, "if here's not Juggut Khan again!"

CHAPTER X

A MARCH, ANOTHER MURDER AND A SUDDEN CHANGE OF PLAN

IT IS not easy to give any kind of real impression of India twenty-four hours after the outbreak of the mutiny. Movement was the key-note of the picture—stealthy, not - yet - quite - confident pack-movement on the one hand, concentrated here and there in blood-red eddies, and, on the other hand, swift, desperate marches in the open.

The moment that the seriousness of the outbreak had been understood, and the orders had gone out by galloper to "Get a move on!" each commanding officer strained every nerve at once to strike where a blow would have the most effect. There was no thought of anything but action, and offensive, not defensive action. Until some one at the head of things proved still to be alive, and had had time to form a plan, each divisional commander acted as he saw fit. That was all that any one was asked to do at first: to act, to strike, to plunge in headlong where the mutiny was thickest and most dangerous, to do anything, in fact, except sit still.

Even with the evidence of mutiny and treachery on every side, with red flames lighting the horizon and the stench of burning villages on every hand, the strange Anglo-Saxon quality persisted that has done more even than the fighting-quality to teach the English tongue to half the world. The native servants who had not yet run away retained their places still, unquestioned. When an Englishman has once made up his mind to trust another man, he trusts him to the hilt, whatever shade of brown or red or white his hide may be.

But, since every rule has its exceptions, there were some among the native servants, who remained ostensibly loyal to their masters, who would better have been shot or hanged at the first suggestion of an outbreak. For naturally a man who is trusted wrongly is far more dangerous than one who is held in suspicion. But it never was the slightest use endeavoring to persuade an average English officer that his own man could be anything but loyal. He may be a thief and a liar and a proved-up rogue in every other way; but as for fearing to let him sleep about the house, or fearing to let him cook his master's food, or fearing to let him carry firearms—well! Perhaps, it is conceit, or maybe just ordinary foolishness. It is not fear!

So, in a country where the art of poisoning has baffled analysts since analysts have been invented, and where blood-hungry fanatic priests, both Hindu and Mahommedan, were preaching and promising the reward of highest heaven to all who could kill an Englishman or die in the attempt, a native cook whose antecedents were obscured in mystery cooked dinner for a British General, and marched with his column to perform the same service while the General tried to trounce the cook's friends and relatives!

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But General Baines felt perfectly at ease about his food. He never gave a thought to it, but ate what was brought to him, sitting his horse most likely, and chewing something as he rode among the men, and saw that they filled their bellies properly. He had made up his mind to march on Harumpore, and to take over the five-hundred-strong contingent there. Then he could swoop down on any of a dozen other points, in any one of which a blow would tell.

He was handicapped by knowing almost too much. He had watched so long, and had suspected for so long that some sort of rebellion was brewing that, now that it had come, his brain was busy with the tail-ends of a hundred scraps of plans. He was so busy wondering what might be happening to all the other men subordinate to him, who would have to be acting on their own initiative, that his own plans lacked something of directness. But there was no lack of decision, and no time was lost. The men marched, and marched their swiftest, in the dust-laden Indian heat. And he marched with them, in among them, and ate what the cook brought him, without a thought but for the best interests of the Government he served.

SO THEY buried General Baines some eight-and-twenty miles from Harumpore, and shot the cook. And, according to the easy Indian theology, the cook was wafted off to paradise, while General Baines betook himself to hell, or was betaken. But the column, three thousand perspiring Britons strong, continued marching, loaded down with haversacks and ammunition and resolve.

It was met, long before the jackals had dug down to General Baines's remains, by the advance-guard of Colonel Kendrick's column, which was coming out of Harumpore because things were not brisk enough in that place to keep it busy. Kendrick himself was riding with the cavalry detachment that led the way southward.

"Who's in command now?" he asked, for they had told him of General Baines's death by poison.

"I am," said a gray-haired officer who rode up at that moment.

"I'm your senior, sir, by two years," answered Kendrick.

"Then you command, sir."

"Very good. Enough time's been wasted. The column can wait here until my main body reaches us. Then we'll march at once on Jailpore. This idea of leaving Jailpore to its fate is nonsense! The rebels are in strength there, and they have perpetrated an abominable outrage. There we will punish them, or else we'll all die in the attempt! If we have to raze Jailpore to the ground, and put every man in it to the sword before we find the four Europeans supposed to be left alive there, our duty is none the less obvious! Here comes my column. Tell the men to be ready to march in ten minutes."

He turned his horse, to look through the dust at the approaching column, but the man who had been superseded touched him on the sleeve.

"What's that? Better have a rest? Tired out, you say? Oh! Form them all up in hollow square, then, and I'll say a few words to them. There are other ways of reviving a leg-weary column than by letting it lie down."

Ten minutes later a dull roar rose up through a steel-shot dust-cloud, and three thousand helmets whirled upward, flashing in the sun. Three thousand weary men had given him his answer! There was no kind of handle to it; no reserve—nothing but generous and unconditional allegiance unto hunger, thirst, pain, weariness, disease or death. It takes a real commander to draw that kind of answer from a tired-out column, but it is a kind of answer, too, that makes commanders! It is not mere talk, on either side. It means that by some sixth sense a strong man and his men have discovered something that is good in each other.

CHAPTER XI

A LITTLE QUESTION OF MILITARY ETIQUETTE PRECEDES THE ADVANCE OF BROWN'S "ARMY" ON JAILPORE

"YOU'VE made good time, friend Juggut Khan!" said Brown, advancing to meet him where the men and the fakir and the interpreter would not be able to overhear.

"Sahib, I killed one horse—the horse you looted for me—and I brought away two from Bholat. One of them carried me more than fifty miles, and then I changed

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to this one, leaving the other on the road. I have orders for you, sahib."

"Hand 'em over then," said Brown. "Orders first, and talk afterward, when there's time!"

The Rajput drew out a sealed envelope, and passed it to him. Brown tore it open, and read the message, scowling at the half-sheet of paper as though it were a death-sentence.

"Where's the General?"

"With his column—twenty or thirty miles away to the northward by now!"

"And he's left me, with this handful, in the lurch?"

"Nay, sahib! As I understood the orders, he has left you with a very honorable mission to fulfil!"

Brown stared hard at the half-sheet of note-paper again. Reading was not his longest suit by any means, and at that he infinitely preferred to wrestle with printed characters.

"Have you read it, Juggut Khan?" he asked.

"Nay, sahib. I can speak English, but not read it."

"Then we're near to being in the same boat, we two!" said Brown with a grin. "I'll have another try! It looks like a good-by message to me—here's the word 'good-by' written at the end above his signature."

"There were other matters, sahib. There was an order. I can not read, but I know what is in the message."

"Well?"

"You, and your twelve——"

"Nine!" corrected Brown.

"Three dead?"

Brown nodded.

"Your nine, then, sahib, and you and I are to proceed immediately to Jailpore, and to gain an entrance if we can, rescue those whom I concealed there and bring them to Harumpore, or to the northward of Harumpore, wherever we can find the column."

"Eleven men are to attempt that?"

Brown was studying out the letter word by word, and discovering to his amazement that its purport was exactly what Juggut Khan pretended.

"If there are no more than eleven of us, then yes, eleven! And, sahib, since you seem to hold at least an island here where a man may lie down unmolested, I propose to sleep for an hour or two, before proceeding. I have had no sleep since I left Jailpore."

"Nothing of the sort!" said Brown. "If we're to march on Jailpore, off we go at once! You can sleep on the road, my son! It's time we paid a visit to that village, I'm thinking. Those treacherous brutes need a lesson. I'd have been down there before, only I wanted to be in full view of the road in case anybody came looking for me from Bholat. We'll need a wagon for the fakir. You can sleep in it too."

"Sleep with a fakir? I? Allah! I am a Rajput, sahib! A sergeant of the Rajput Horse, retired!"

"I wouldn't want to sleep with him myself!" admitted Brown. "Come and look at him. You can smell him from here, but the sight of him's the real thing!"

The Rajput swaggered up beside Brown, after loosening his horse's girths and lifting the saddle for a moment.

"He's not the only one that needs a drink!" said Brown. "We're all dry as brick-dust here, except the fakir!"

"He must wait a while before he drinks. Show me the fakir. Why, Brown sahib, know you what you have there?"

"The father of all the smells, and all the dirt and all the evil eyes and evil tongues in Asia!" Brown hazarded.

"More than that, sahib! That is the nameless fakir—him whom they know as HE! Has there been no attempt made to rescue him?"

"They rescued him once, and murdered three of my men to get him. When they tried again, I put a halter round his neck and he and I arranged a sort of temporary compromise."

"And the terms of it?"

"Oh, he's supposed to have performed a miracle. He made us unship the halter, and fall down flat, and he's supposed to be keeping us by him, by a sort of spell, so's to give us something extra-special in the line of ghastly deaths at his own convenience. That way, I was able to wait for news from Bholat—see?"

"You could have captured no more important prisoner than that, sahib, let me tell you! They believe him to be almost a god; so nearly one that the gods themselves obey his orders now and then! It was he, and no other, that told the men of Jailpore that he would make them impervi-

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ous to bullets. If we have him, sahib, we have the key to Jailpore!"

"We have certainly got him," said Brown. "You can see him, and you can smell him. I'll order one of the men to prick him with a bayonet, if you want to hear him, too! I wouldn't feel him, if I were you!"

"He must come, too, to Jailpore!"

"Of course he comes!"

"Then, sahib, let us move away from here to where there is water. There let us rest until sundown, and then march, in the cool of the evening. It will be better so. And of a truth I must sleep, or else drop dead from weariness."

"Does that message put you in command?" asked Brown, a trifle truculently.

"No, sahib! But it orders you to listen to my advice whenever possible."

"That means that you are under my orders?"

"That letter does not say so, sahib!"

"Very well, are you, or are you not?"

"We are supposed to act in concert, sahib."

"It doesn't say so in the letter! Yes, or no? Are you going to obey orders, or aren't you? In other words, are you coming with me, or do you stay behind?"

"I come with you, sahib!"

"Then you obey my orders!"

"But the letter says——"

"That I'm to take your advice whenever possible! I don't need advice just at the moment, thanks! I've got orders here to march, and I'm off at once! You can please yourself whether you come with me or not, but if you come you come on my terms."

"I go with you, sahib."

"Under my orders?"

"Yes, sahib."

"ALL right, Juggut Khan. Here's my hand on it. Now, we'll swoop down on that village, and take the fakir with us, with a halter round his neck for the sake of argument. We'll get two bullock-carts down there, and we'll stick him in one of them, with Sidiki the interpreter tied to him. Sidiki won't like it, but he's only a Beluchi anyway! You get in the other, and get all the sleep you can. You and I'll take turns sleeping all the way to Jailpore, so's to be fresh, both of us, and fit for anything by the time that we get there!"

"I am ready, sahib."

"You two men who carried old Stinkijink before, pick him up again!" shouted Brown. "Let him feel the bayonet if he makes a noise, but carry him gently as though you loved him. The rest—'Tshun! Form two-deep—on the center—close order, march. Ri' dress. Eyes front. Ri' turn. By the left—quick march."

The Rajput strode beside Brown, wondering wearily whether it was worth his while to offer him advice or not, and keeping his tired eyes ever moving in the direction of the distant huts.

"They have rifles, sahib?" he queried.

"Lots of 'em! Three that they took from my men, among others."

"It would not be well to march into a trap at this stage."

"As well now as later."

"True, sahib! And my time has not come yet; I know it. Else had I died of weariness, as my horse did."

Brown kept rigidly to that point of view in everything he did, from that time on until he reached Jailpore. He believed himself to be engaged on a forlorn hope that was so close to being an absolute impossibility as to be almost the same thing. He had no doubt whatever in his own mind but that his own death, and the death of those with him, was a matter now of hours, or possibly of minutes. His one resolute determination was to die, and make the others die, in a manner befitting their oath of service. He had orders, and he would pass them on according to his interpretation of them. He would obey his orders, and they theirs, and the rest was no business of his or anybody's.

They put the fakir in a hut, where Juggut Khan—too weary for foraging—stood guard over him. When a crowd collected round the hut, and Juggut Khan applied the butt of a lighted cigarette to the tender skin between the fakir's shoulder-blades, the anxious fakir-worshippers were told that all was well. They were to let the white soldiers take two wagons, or three even, if they wanted them. They were to return to their houses at once, and hide, lest the devils who would shortly overwhelm the white men should make mistakes and include them, too, in the whelming. He, the fakir, intended to take the white men for a little journey along the road toward Jailpore, where the devils who would deal with them would have no opportunity to make

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mistakes. And, since the natives knew that Jailpore was a rebel stronghold, and that ten white men and a native would have no chance to do the slightest damage there, they chose to believe the fakir and to obey him.

Hindus have as stubborn and unalterable a habit of obeying and believing their priests—when the fancy suits them—as white men of other religions have.

If the fakir had told them through the doorway of the hut that he intended going with the white men in the direction of Bholat, they would most surely have prevented him. But it suited them very well indeed to have the white men killed elsewhere.

It was not likely, but there *might* be a column on its way from Bholat now; and if that column came, and found the bones of British soldiers as well as a burned-out guard-house, vengeance would be dire and prompt. Between where they were and Jailpore, the white men could not possibly escape. And at Jailpore, if not sooner, they must surely die. So they believed the fakir, and retired to the seclusion of their houses.

IT WAS wonderful, of course, but no more wonderful than a thousand other happenings in '57. All laws of probability and general average were upset that year, when sixty thousand men held down an armed continent. Even stranger things were happening than that two bullock-carts should dawdle through a rebel-seething district in the direction of a plundered, blood-soaked rebel stronghold; stranger even than that on the foremost bullock-cart a lean and louse-infested fakir should be squatting, guarded by British soldiers, who marched on either hand; or that a Rajput, who could trace his birth from a thousand-year-long line of royal chieftains, should be sleeping in the bullock-cart behind, followed closely by a black charger with a British saddle on its back, which ate corn from the tail-board of the wagon; stranger things, even, than that a British sergeant should be marching last of all, with his stern eyes roving a little wildly but his jaw set firm and his tread as rigid and authoritative and abrupt as though he were marching to inspect accouterments.

In more than a dozen places, about a dozen men were holding a fort against an army. They were using every wile and trick and dodge that ingenuity or inspiration could provide them with, and they were mostly contriving to hold out. But there were none who did anything more daring or more unusual than to march to the attack of a city, with a hostile fakir in the van, and nothing else but their eleven selves and their rifles to assist them. There is a tremendous difference between defending when you have to, and attacking when you might retire.

CHAPTER XII

BROWN STILL COMMANDS, BUT JUGGUT KAHN IS LEADER

THERE were many more causes than one that worked together to make possible the entry of Brown and his little force into Jailpore. They were brave men; they were more than brave and they held the ace of trumps, as Brown had stated, in the person of the fakir known as "He." But luck favored them as well, and but for luck they must have perished half a dozen times.

They marched the whole of the first afternoon, and met no one. They only overtook little straggling parties of rebels, making one and all for Jailpore, who bolted at the sight of them, imagining them probably to be the advance-guard of a larger force. The very idiocy of marching eleven strong through a country infested by their enemies was in their favor. Nobody could believe that there were no more than eleven of them. Even the English could not be such lunatics!

That night, they rested for a while, and then went on again. During the day following they lay in a hollow between some trees and rested, and slept by turns. They suffered agonies from the heat, and not a little from hunger, and once or twice they were hard put to it to stop the Rajput's charger from neighing when a native pony passed along the near-by road. But night came again, and with it the screen of darkness for their strange, almost defenseless caravan. Once or twice the fakir tried to shout an alarm to passing villagers, but the quick and energetic application of a cleaning-rod by Brown stopped him always in the nick of time, and they came within sight of the battlements of Jailpore without an accident.

Then, though, their problem became

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really serious, and it was a series of circumstances altogether out of their control and not connected with them that made their entry possible.

The mutineers in Jailpore had learned that Kendrick sahib was coming down on them from the north by forced marches with 3,500 men or more. They were putting the place into a state of siege, and getting ready by all means in their power to oppose him.

Little attention was being paid to small parties of arrivals from no man knew or cared where. And, in a final effort to find the four who were the lure that was bringing Kendrick down on them, the city was once more being turned upside down and inside out, and men were even being tortured who were thought to know of hiding-places.

With purely Eastern logic, the leaders of the rebels had decided that the sight of the bodies of the four, writhing in their last agony on the sun-scorched outer wall, would mightily discourage the British when they came. So no efforts were being spared and no stones left unturned to find them. The hooks on the wall were sharp and ready, so that they might be impaled without loss of time in full view of their would-be rescuers.

Almost every secret passage of the thousand odd had been explored. In the hurry to run through them and explore the next one, doors had been left open here and there that had been kept closed in some instances for centuries.

One door in particular, placed cornerwise in a buttress of the outer wall, was spotted by Juggut Khan as he circled round the city on his charger at dusk on the day following their arrival. He brought his charger back to where the others lay concealed, and then went on an exploring-expedition on foot—to discover that the outer city wall was like a sponge, a nest of honeycombed cells and passages wandering interminably in the fifty-foot-thick brick and rubble rampart.

AND while he searched amid the mazy windings of the wall, Bill Brown sat in the forked top of a tree and studied out the ground-plan of the city. He was imprinting certain landmarks in his memory for future reference, and trying—with a brain that ached from the apparent hopelessness of the task—to figure out a plan.

He knew by now that the four he had come to rescue were hidden underneath the powder-magazine, and he could see the magazine itself. But he could think of no way of rescuing them, for the city absolutely boiled with frantic, mixed-up castes and creeds picked at random, and thrown in at random from the whole of India. A mouse could not have passed through the streets undetected!

And yet, from a soldier's point of view, there were certain fascinating details to be noticed about that powder-magazine. In the first place, it had been constructed for a granary by an emperor who never heard of Joseph, but who had the same ideal plan for cornering the people's food-supply. And since labor had been unlimited, and cheap, he had gone about building the thing on the most thoroughly unpractical and most pretentious plan that he and his architects could figure out. It was big enough to hold about ten times as much grain as the province could grow in any one year of plenty. And, since that was the least practical and most ungranary-like shape, he had caused it to be built like an enormous beehive, with a tiny platform at the top.

Winding round and round the huge stone dome, and on the outside, was a six-foot-wide trail, which was the elevator. Up this, each with a sack or a basket on his head, the population was to have been induced to run in single file, dumping its hard-won corn into the granary through an opening at the top until the granary was full.

The emperor died—by poison—before he could see his cherished project put into execution, but he had been a very thorough calculator, and a builder who believed in permanency. He had foreseen that when the granary was full, and the screw-jacks were turned beneath the cost of living, there would probably be efforts made by unwashed, untutored, unenlightened mobs to rape his storehouse. So he had made the little platform at the top a veritable fortress of a place, such as a handful of men could hold against a hundred thousand.

There was no known entrance to the granary above ground, except on the ground level, where a huge stone gateway frowned above a teak-and-iron door. Above that door there were galleries, and fortalices and

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cunningly invented battlements in miniature, from behind whose shelter a resolute defending-party could pour out a hundred different kinds of death on a hungry crowd. The place was naturally fire-proof and naturally cool—as far as any building can be cool in Central India. It was a first-class, ideal powder-magazine, if useless as a granary; and the last new conquerors of India had hastened to adopt it as a means of storing up the explosive medicine with which they kept their foothold.

Naturally, none but white soldiers, and a very few of the more trusted natives, had ever been allowed to go inside the powder-magazine. The secret passages beneath it had never been intended for public convenience or information. They had been designed as a means of rushing defenders secretly into the granary, and they connected with a tunnel underneath the palace that had just been burned. They also connected with the outer wall in such a way that defenders from the ramparts might be rushed there too, if wanted in a hurry. But, since there never had been corn kept in the granary, and nobody had ever had the slightest need to force an entrance, the knowledge even of the existence of the passages had become barely a memory, and there was not a man living in Jailpore who knew exactly where they began or where they ended. There was a man outside who knew, but none inside.

The point about the powder-magazine which most appealed to Brown—next after his knowledge of its contents, mineral and human—was the fact that the little platform at its summit overlooked the city-wall, and that the side of the granary actually touched the wall on the side of the city farthest from where he sat and spied it out. Ten men on that protected platform, he thought, might suffer from the sun, but they could hold the building and command a good-sized section of the city ramparts against all comers.

He noticed too, though that seemed immaterial at the time, that one well-aimed shot from heavy ordnance might crash through the upper dome and set off the powder underneath. There was no artillery that could be brought against the place, either with the British force or with the mutineers, but the thought set him to wondering how much powder there might be stored on the huge round floor below, and what would happen should it become ignited. It was a sanguinary, interesting, subtle kind of thought, that suited the condition of his brain exactly! He climbed down from the tree, feeling almost good-natured.

AT THE bottom he met Juggut Khan, waiting for him patiently.

"What have you seen, sahib?" he asked him. "Have you formed a plan?"

"I've been wishing I was Joshua!" said Brown. "I'd like to make my men march round the city and blow trumpets, and then see the walls fall down. I can think of several things to do, if we could only get inside. But I can't think how to get there."

"I have found a way in!" said Juggut Khan. "I have cross-questioned that fakir of ours as well, with a little assistance from a cleaning-rod wielded by one of your men. He knows the way too. He says he is the only man who knows it—in which he lies, since I too have discovered it. But his knowledge may help as well."

"What's that about a cleaning-rod?" asked Brown.

"It was used on him to help him forget his vow of silence."

"When?"

"When you were up that tree, sahib!"

"Have you been giving my men orders?"

"Nay, sahib!"

"How did he come to beat the fakir, then?"

"We both arrived at the same conclusion at the same moment, and the fakir received the benefit!"

"Who held him, you?"

"Nay, sahib! God forbid! I am a clean man. I listened to his conversation. The Beluchi held him."

"Oh! Well, I like you well enough, Juggut Khan, but there are things about you that I don't like. You're too fond of doing things on your own responsibility, and you're much too fond of using oaths. Your soul is none o' my business; you're a heathen anyhow, and no longer in the Service. But, I'll trouble you not to use those disgraceful oaths of yours in the presence of the men! Do you understand me?"

"I understand you, sahib. If my respect for all your other qualities were not so profound, I would laugh at you! As it is, if your honor should see fit to turn the bul-

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locks loose, and tie the fakir fast between two men and follow me, it seems to me dark enough by now, and I know the way. Might I furthermore suggest that the ammunition-box would make a reasonable load for another two men?"

"Hadn't we better bring our rifles too?" asked Brown sarcastically. "Upon my honor, Juggut Khan! You're getting childish! Are your nerves upset, or what? Lead on, man! Lead on!"

"Listen. There are two ways, sahib. One way leads from the burned-out barracks to the cellar where the women lie hidden. That way is closed by débris. The other way leads from the outer wall by a very winding route to the cellar where the women are. The fakir knows that way, and I do not, though I know of it. There is a third way, though, that leads from the outer wall, where I have been exploring, straight almost, if you disregard a wind or two, to the inside of the powder-magazine. It enters the magazine through a doorway secretly contrived in an upright pillar—or so the fakir swears. Now this is my notion, sahib. If we go in by the lower way, we must come out that way, and run the risk of being caught as we emerge. That risk will be greatly enhanced when we have frightened women with us whose eyes have been blinded by the darkness. But, if we go in by the upper way, and enter the magazine itself, I can make the fakir show us how to lift the stone trap-door I spoke of—the one that I closed when I hid the women. Then I can ascend with him, and with say four men, while you ascend to the platform at the top with the remainder of the men, and guard our rear and our exit. From the top, you will be able to see us as we emerge, and can cover our retreat, and follow."

"That sounds like a roundabout sort of plan to me!" said Brown. "Why not go straight in by the lower route, and gather up the women, and carry 'em out, and make a bolt for it?"

"Because, sahib, we will be at the fakir's mercy."

"Nonsense! He's at our mercy."

"Think, sahib! There, he will be in his own bat's nest, so to speak. These fakirs are the only men who know the windings of all the secret passages. They are the rats of religion and intrigue. At any step he might lead us into an ambush, and we might be overwhelmed before we knew that we were attacked. If we go the other way, though, I can lead the way myself, and we need only take the fakir with us to show us how to open the door."

"Very well," said Brown. "Let's get a move on, though! I'm beginning to think that you're a better talker than a fighter, Juggut Khan!"

"Yes, sahib? I trust there will be no fighting!" But the Rajput smiled as he said it, and thought of a certain lance-shaft which had been broken in the streets of Jailpore.

"Lead on! Fall in behind me, men! Walk quietly, now, and remember. Hold your tongues! Each man keep his eye on me, and a finger on the trigger!"

The Beluchi and the fakir and Juggut Khan moved in the van, with two men to hold the fakir. Next marched, or rather tiptoed, Sergeant Brown, followed by the other men in single file. In that order they hastened after Juggut Khan, through the darkness, across a dried-out moat and round the corner of a huge stone buttress. There they disappeared inside the wall, and a stone swung round and closed the gap behind the last of them. There was no alarm given, and not a sign or a sound of any kind to betoken that any one had seen them. Inside the walls the city roared like a flood-fed maelstrom, and outside all was darkness and the silence of the dead.

CHAPTER XIII

BROWN MAKES HIS CHOICE BETWEEN THE CLAIMS OF LOVE AND DUTY

THERE was some smart work done inside the powder-magazine. To be able to appreciate it properly one would be obliged to do what they did—wander through a maze of tunnels in a city-wall, blinded by darkness, oppressed by the stored-up stuffiness and heat of ages and deafened by the stillness—then emerge unexpectedly in the lamp-lit magazine, among mutineers who sprawled, and laughed, and chewed betel-nut at their ease upon the powder-kegs.

Both sides were taken by surprise, but the mutineers had the nominal advantage, for their eyes were accustomed to the light. They had the advantage in numbers, too, by almost two to one. But they dared not

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fire, for fear of setting off the magazine, whereas Brown and his little force dared anything. They fully expected to die, and might as well die that way as any other. And a quick death for the women down below would be better than anything the rebels had in store for them. Brown yelled an order, and the rest was too quick, nearly, for the eye to follow.

Three rebels died with bullets in them, and the rest stampeded for the teak-and-metal door, to find it locked on them, and Brown and the Rajput standing in front of it on guard.

The mutineers attacked fiercely. They flung themselves all together on the two. But they had yet to learn that they were tackling, or endeavoring to tackle, the two finest swordsmen in that part of India. And when they turned, to find more room to fight in, or to draw their breath, they had to face nine bayonets that hemmed them in, and drove them closer and even closer to the swords again. They shouted, but no sound could pierce the walls or escape through that tremendous door. Even the sound of firing merely echoed upward until it reached the dome, and then filtered out and upward through the opening above. They might as well have shouted to their friends in Bholat!

For ten minutes, perhaps, the battle surged and swayed on the stone floor, first one side rushing, then the other. But man after man of the mutineers went down—appalled by the amazing swordsmanship, disheartened by the grim determination of their adversaries, bewildered to feebleness by the suddenness of the attack.

Soon there were but eight of them facing the blood-wet steel, and then Brown shouted for a fresh formation, swung his contingent into line and led them with a rush across the floor that swept the remaining mutineers off their feet.

Three more went down with steel through them, and then the rest surrendered, throwing down their arms and begging mercy. Brown made a bundle of their arms, stowed it in a corner and made the prisoners stand together in a bunch, while he searched them thoroughly.

"If we can't get that trap-door open now, with these to help us," he remarked, panting and wiping the clotted blood off his sword on a Hindu prisoner's trousers, "it'll be a heavier proposition than I think!"

"There's a trick to it," said Juggut Khan, panting too, for the battle had been fierce and furious while it lasted. "The fakir knows the trick. It is heavy, in any case. But, if we make him tell us, we can manage it."

THERE followed delay while the fakir was induced to forego the pleasure of a sulking fit. He seemed like a child, anxious to emphasize their dependence on his knowledge, and needing to be recompelled to each new thing they needed of him. He was perfectly content, though, to surrender when he felt the weight of a cleaning-rod on his anatomy, or something in the way of fire—a match or a cigarette for instance—placed where he would get the most sensation from it.

Then followed more delay, while they rigged a lever of sorts, and a rope through an iron ring in the trap, and while Juggut Khan hunted for the secret catch that the fakir swore was hidden underneath a smaller stone that hinged in the middle of the floor. He found it at last, moved it and came across to lend a hand with the lever and the rope.

The fakir sat still and smiled at them. His eyes gleamed more horribly than ever, and his withered arm seemed more than ever to be calling down dire vengeance on them.

"I believe that monster is up to tricks of some kind!" swore Brown.

"He can't do anything," said Juggut Khan. "If we were all to put our weight against this, all together, we and the prisoners, sahib, we could get it open in a second."

"All together, then!" said Brown. "Come on, there! Lend a hand!"

The prisoners and Brown's men and Juggut Khan and the Beluchi bent their backs above the lever, or hauled taut on the rope, and the fakir wriggled with some secret joke.

"At the word three!" said Brown. "Then all together!"

"One!"

"Two!"

The fakir writhed delightedly. He seemed more than ever like a wickedly malicious child.

"Three!"

They strained their utmost, and the huge stone trap gave way with a sudden jerk.

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"For the love of——"

They all jumped, but they were strained in the wrong positions for a quick recovery, and the ten-ton rock rolled back on unseen hinges to crush them all, and rolled back and yet further back—and then stayed! Brown had snatched a rifle, and had placed it between the rolling rock and the wall!

He stood wiping the sweat from his forehead, while the rest recovered their lost balance and walked out from behind unscathed. The rifle creaked and bent and split. Then the stone leaned farther back, reached the wall and stayed there!

"A near thing that!" said Brown. "That fakir's a bright beauty, isn't he!"

"Shall I kick him, sir?" asked one of Brown's men.

"Kick him? No! What good'd that do? What next, Juggut Khan?"

But Juggut Khan was bending down, and listening at the hole laid bare by the huge hinged trap.

"Silence!" commanded Brown.

THE men held their breath, even, but not a sound came up from the darkness down below.

"Are they dead, d'you suppose?" asked Brown.

And, even as he asked it, some one in the darkness snuffled, and he heard a woman's voice that moaned.

"Snff—snff—snff! I wonder if I'm dead yet! I wouldn't be, I know, if Bill were here! He'd ha' got us out!"

"There is one of them alive!" said Juggut Khan.

"So I notice!" answered Brown, with a strange dry quaver in his voice. "Go down and bring her up, please! Take three or four men with you. It won't do to bring women and a child up here and let 'em see this awful fakir and these corpses. Take your time about bringing 'em up, while I make the prisoners carry their dead up on to the roof. I'll take the fakir up there too where he's out of mischief!"

Just as a six-foot-wide pathway ran round and round the outside of the dome, another one, scarcely more than a yard wide, ran round the inside, and formed a roadway to the top in place of a stair. It took the prisoners and Brown's men fifteen minutes of continuous effort to carry up the dead and the fakir, and lay them on the roof.

"Pitch the dead over!" ordered Brown, and the mutineers obeyed.

"I've a mind to pitch you over too!" he growled at the fakir, and the strange creature seemed to understand him, for his eyes changed from their baleful hatred to a look of fear.

The bodies slid and rolled down the rounded roof, and fell with a thud against the battlements, or else went rolling down the circular causeway that led to the street below.

Brown seemed to be garnering ideas from watching them. He gazed down at the noisy tumult of the city, watching for a while the efforts of an ill-directed crowd to put out a fire that blazed in a distant quarter of the bazaar.

There seemed to him something strangely preconcerted about much of the hurrying to and fro below him. It struck him as being far too orderly to be the mere boiling of a loot-crazed mob.

His prisoners gave the secret to him. They were leaning against the parapet on the other side—the side closest to the city wall, and farthest from the top of the causeway—and they were chattering together excitedly in undertones. Brown walked round to where they stood, and stared where they stared. Just as they had done, he recognized what lay below him.

It was faintly outlined in the blackness, picked out here and there by lanterns, and still too far away for most civilians to name it until the sun rose and showed its detail. But Brown, the soldier, knew on the instant, and so did his men.

Suddenly and unexpectedly and sweetly, like a voice in the night that spoke of hope and strength and the rebirth of order out of chaos, a bugle gave tongue from where the lanterns swung in straight-kept lines.

"Oh, Juggut Khan! Oh, Juggut Khan!"

Bill Brown's voice boomed through the opening in the dome, and spread down the walls of the powder-magazine as though in the inside of a speaking-trumpet.

"Brown sahib?"

"The army has got here from the north! It has come down here from Harumpore! It's outside the walls now, lying on its arms, and evidently waiting to attack at daylight!"

"I, too, have news, Brown sahib! All four are living! All four lie here on the floor of the magazine, and they recover

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rapidly. They are all but strong enough to stand."

"Good! Then come up here, Juggut Khan!"

That winding pathway up the inside of the dome took longer to negotiate than an ordinary stairway would have done, but presently the Rajput leaned against the parapet and panted beside Brown.

"D'you see them? There they are! Now, look on this side! D'you see the preparations going on? D'you realize what the next thing's going to be? They'll come for powder for the guns, so's to have it all ready for the gun-crews when the fun begins at dawn! Listen! Here they are already!"

A THUNDERING had started on the great teak door below—a thundering that echoed through the dome like the reverberations of an earthquake. It was punctuated by the screams of women. The prisoners changed their attitude, and eyed Brown and the Rajput with an air of truculence again.

"They'll be up this causeway in a minute, sahib! Listen. There! They've seen the dead bodies that you tossed over. Better it had been to keep them up here for a while."

"Never mind! We can hold this causeway until morning! Men! Take close order. Line up at the causeway-entrance. Kneel. Prepare for volley-firing. Now, let 'em come!"

"I am for making an immediate escape, sahib!"

"Go ahead!" said Brown, almost dreamily.

He seemed to be thinking hard on some other subject as he spoke.

"Sahib, one of the women there—she who is maid to the other two—asked me where Bill Brown might be! She swore to me that she had recognized his voice when the trap-door opened up above her. Are you not Bill Brown?"

"Yes, I'm William Brown!"

"Her name, she says, is Emmett!"

"You don't surprise me, Juggut Khan! I thought I had recognized her voice. It seemed strangely familiar. Well — here come the rebels up the causeway. See? They're at the bottom now with lanterns! Ready, men!"

There came the answering click of breech-bolts, and a little rustling as each man eased his position, and laid his elbow on his knee.

"Can you find your way out through the way we came, Juggut Khan?"

"Of course I can!"

"Are all the women on the floor?"

"Three women and the child."

"Can you close the trap-door again?"

"Surely! It is only opening it that is difficult."

"Then close it before you go. I've got a reason! Send one of my men up here with a lantern—one of those that are burning in the magazine. I want to signal."

"Very well, sahib!"

"Then take the women, with four of my men to help them walk, and get out as quickly as you can by the way we all came in. Wait for the rest of my men when you reach the opening in the outer wall, and when they reach you allot two men to carry each woman, and run—the whole lot of you—for the army over yonder. One of the women will object. She will want to see me first. Use force, if necessary!"

"Are you, then, not coming, sahib?"

"I have another plan. Here they come! Hurry now, be off with the women! Volley-firing—ready—present!"

Pattering footsteps sounded on the causeway, and a little crowd of nearly doubled figures came up it at a run.

"Fire!"

The volley took the rebels absolutely by surprise, and no man could miss his mark at that short range. Five of the rebels fell back headlong, and the rest, who followed up the causeway, turned on their heels and ran.

"'Bout turn!" Brown shouted suddenly. "Use the steel, men! Use the steel!"

His own sword was flashing, and lunging as he spoke, and he had already checked a sudden rush by the prisoners.

They had thought the moment favorable for joining in the scrimmage from the rear!

"All right! That'll do them! I'll attend to 'em now!"

A man came running up with the lantern Brown had asked for, and Brown took it and began waving it above his head.

"They must have heard that volley!" he muttered to himself. "Ah! There's the answer!"

A red light began to dance over in the British camp, moving up and down and sideways in sudden little jerks. Brown read

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the jerks, as he could never have read writing, and a moment later he answered them.

"Now, down below, the lot of you! Give me your rifle, you. I'll need it."

"Not coming, sir?"

"Not yet. There's something else yet, and I can do it best. Besides, some one has got to guard the causeway still. There might be a rush again at any minute. Listen now. Obey Juggut Khan implicitly as soon as you get down. His orders are my orders. Understand? Very well, then. And you without a weapon, your job is to shut the door that you leave the magazine by tight from the outside—d'you understand me? Call up when you're all through the door, and then shut it tight!"

"But, how'll you get out, sir?"

"That's my business. One minute, though. Here they come again. Get ready to fire another volley!"

The mutineers made another and a more determined rush up the causeway, coming up it more than twenty strong, and at the double. Brown let one volley loose in the midst of them, then led his men at the charge down on them and drove them over the edge of the causeway by dint of sheer impact and cold steel. Not one of them reached the ground alive, and in the darkness it must have been impossible for the mutineers below to divine how many were the granary's defenders.

"THAT'LL keep 'em quiet for a while, I'll wager! Now, quick, you men! Get down below, and follow Juggut Khan, and don't forget to shut the door tight on you. These prisoners here are going to follow you—they may as well go down with you for that matter. No! that won't do. They could open the door below, couldn't they? They'll have to stay up here. Got any rope? Then bind them, somebody. Bind their hands and feet. Now, off with you!"

Brown spent the next few minutes signaling with the lantern, and reading answering flashes that zigzagged in the velvet blackness of the British lines. Then, as a voice boomed up through the granary, "All's well, sir! I'm just about to shut the door!" he fixed his eyes on the fakir, and laughed at him.

"You and I are going to turn in our accounts of how we've worked out this 'Hookum hai' business, my friend!" he told him. "You've given orders, and I've obeyed orders! We've both accounted for a death or two, and we've both accepted responsibility. We're going to know in less than five minutes from now which of us two was justified. There's one thing I know, though, without asking. There's one person, and she a woman, who'll weep for me. Will anybody weep for you, I wonder?"

A lantern waved wildly from the British camp, and Brown seized his own lantern and signaled an answer.

"See that? That's to say, you glassy-eyed horror you, that our mutual friend Juggut Khan has been seen emerging like a rat from a hole in the wall. I'll give him and his party one more minute to get clear. Then there's going to be a holocaust, my friend!"

He cocked his rifle, and examined the breech-bolt and the foresight carefully. The fakir shuddered, evidently thinking that the charge was intended for himself.

"No! It won't be that way. I know a better! I'm taking a leaf from your book and doing harm by wholesale!"

Brown leaned down into the opening of the dome, and brought the rifle to his shoulder. There was a chorus of yells from the prisoners, and a noise like a wounded horse's scream from the fakir. The rest were bound, but the fakir rose and writhed toward him on his heels, with his sound arm stretched up in an attitude of despair beside the withered one.

A chorus of bugles burst out from the British camp, and a volley ripped through the blackness.

"All right! Here goes!" said Brown. And he aimed down into the shadowy powder-magazine, and pulled the trigger.

Ten minutes later, an army three thousand and five hundred strong marched in through the gap made in the outer wall by a granary that had spread itself through—and not over—what was in its way. There were seventeen tons of powder that responded to the invitation of Brown's bullet.

CHAPTER XIV

"ARE YOU ALIVE OR DEAD? MAN OR GHOST?"

EXPLOSIONS are among the few things —or the many things, whichever way you like to look at it!—that science can

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not undertake to harness or account for. When a gun blows up, or a powder-magazine, the shock kills whom it kills, as when a shell bursts in a dense-packed firing-line. You can not kill any man before his time comes, even if a thousand tons of solid masonry combine with you to whelm him, and go hurtling through the air with him to absolutely obvious destruction.

The fakir's time had come, and the prisoners' time had come. But Sergeant William Brown's had not.

They found him, blackened by powder, and with every stitch of clothing blown from him, clinging to a bunch of lotus-stems in a temple-pond. There was a piece of fakir in the water with him, and about a ton of broken granary, besides the remnants of a rifle and other proof that he had come belched out of a holocaust. The men who came on him had given their officer the slip, and were bent on a private looting-expedition of their own. But by the time that they had dragged him from the water, and he had looted them of wherewithal to clothe himself, their thoughts of plunder had departed from them. Brown had a way of quite monopolizing people's thoughts!

There were twenty of them, and he led them all that night, and all through the morning and the afternoon that followed. He held them together and worked them and wheeled them and coached and cheered and compelled them through the hell-tumult of the ghastliest thing there is beneath the dome of heaven—house-to-house fighting in an Eastern city. And at the end of it, when the bugles blew at last "Cease fire," and many of the men were marched away by companies to put out the conflagrations that were blazing here and there, he led them outside the city wall, stood them at ease in their own line and saluted their Commanding-Officer.

"TWENTY men of yours, sir. All present and correct."

"Which twenty?"

"Of Mr. Blair's half-company."

"Where's Mr. Blair?"

"Dunno, sir!"

"Since when have you had charge of them?"

"Since they broke into the city yesterday, sir."

"And you haven't lost a man?"

"Had lots of luck, sir!"

"Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm Sergeant Brown, sir."

"Of the Rifles?"

"Of the Rifles, sir."

"Were you the man who signaled to us from the magazine and blew it up and made the breach in the wall for us to enter by?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you alive, or dead? Man or ghost?"

"I'm pretty much alive, sir, thank you!"

"D'you realize that you made the taking of Jailpore possible? That but for you we'd have been trying still to storm the walls without artillery?"

"I had the chance, sir, and I only did what any other man would ha' done under the like circumstances."

"Go and tell that to the Horse Marines—or, rather, tell it to Colonel Kendrick! Go and report to him at once. Possibly he'll see it through your eyes!"

So Brown marched off to report himself, and he found Colonel Kendrick nursing a badly wounded arm before a torn and mud-stained tent.

"Who are you?" said the Colonel, as Brown saluted him.

"I'm Sergeant Brown, sir."

"Not Bill Brown of the Rifles?"

"Yes, sir!"

"You lie! He was blown up on the roof of the powder-magazine! I suppose every man who's gone mad from the heat will be saying that he's Brown!'

"I'm Brown, sir! I had written orders from General Baines to enter Jailpore and rescue three women and a child."

"Where are your orders?"

"Lost 'em, sir, in the explosion."

"For a madman, you're a circumstantial liar! What happened to the women?"

The Colonel sat back, and smothered an exclamation of agony as the nerves in his injured arm tortured him afresh. He had asked a question which should settle once and for all this man's pretentions, and he waited for the answer with an air of certainty. It was on his lips to call the guard to take the lunatic away.

"Juggut Khan, the Rajput, took them, with nine of my men, and brought them in to your camp last night, sir. I naturally haven't seen them since."

"Will the women know you?"

"One of them will, sir."

"Which one?"

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"Jane Emmett, sir."

"Well, we'll see!"

The Colonel called an orderly, and sent the orderly running for Jane Emmett. A minute later two strong arms were thrown round Bill Brown from behind, and he was all but carried off his feet.

"Oh, Bill—Bill—Bill! I knew you'd be all right! Turn round, Bill! Look at me!"

She was clinging to him in such a manner that he could not turn, but he managed to pry her hands loose, and to draw her round in front of him.

"I knew, Bill! I felt sure you'd come! And I recognized your voice the minute that the trap-door opened and I heard it! I did, Bill! I knew you in a minute! I didn't worry then! I knew you wouldn't come and talk to me as long as there was any duty to be done. I just waited! They said you were killed in the explosion, but I knew you weren't! I knew it! I did! I knew it!"

"Face me, please!" said Colonel Kendrick. "Now, Jane Emmett, is that man Sergeant William Brown, of the Rifles?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he the man who entered Jailpore with nine men and a Rajput, and came to your assistance?"

"Yes, sir! He's the same man who spoke in the powder-magazine."

"Do you confirm that?" he asked Brown.

"Under favor, sir, my men must be somewhere, if they're not all killed. They'll recognize me. And there's the other lot I led all last night and all to-day. They'll tell you where they found me!"

"Never mind! I've decided I believe you! D'you realize that you're something of a marvel?"

"No, sir—except that I've had marvelous luck!"

"Well, I shall take great pleasure in mentioning your name in despatches. It will go direct, at first hand, to Her Majesty the Queen! There are few men, let me tell you, Sergeant Brown, who would dare what you dared in the first place. But, more than that, there are even fewer men who would leave a sweetheart in some one else's care while they blew up a powder-magazine with themselves on top of it, in order to make a breach for the army to come in by! My right hand's out of action unfortunately—you'll have to shake my left!"

The Colonel rose, held his uninjured hand out and Brown shook it, since he was ordered to.

"I consider it an honor and a privilege to have shaken hands with you, Sergeant Brown!" said Colonel Kendrick.

"Thank you, sir!" said Brown, taking one step back, and then saluting. "May I join my regiment, sir?"

HE JOINED his regiment, when he had helped to sort out the bleeding remnants of it from among the byways and back alleys of Jailpore. And the chaplain married him and Jane Emmett out of hand. He sent her off at once with her former mistress to the Coast, and marched off with his regiment to Delhi. And at Delhi his name was once more mentioned in despatches.

When the Mutiny was over, and the country had settled down again to peace and reincarnation of a nation had begun, Brown found himself hoisted to a civil appointment that was greater and more highly paid than anything his modest soul had ever dreamed of.

He never understood the reason for it, although he did his fighting-best consistently to fill the job; and he never understood why Queen Victoria should have taken the trouble to write a letter to him in which she thanked him personally, nor why they should have singled out for praise and special notice a fellow who had merely done his duty.

Perhaps that was the reason why he was such a conspicuous success in civil life. They still talk of how Bill Brown, with Jane his wife and Juggut Khan the Rajput to advise him, was Resident Political Adviser to a Maharajah, and of how the Maharajah loathed him, and looked sideways at him—but obeyed. That, though, is not a war-story. It is a story of the saving of a war, and shall go on record, some day, beneath a title of its own.

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THE CAMP-FIRE

A Meeting-Place for Readers, Writers and Adventurers.

IN THIS issue, "Loot and Laundry." By this time I needn't tell you that Frederick William Wallace gets material for his tales of the Banks fisherman by the simple process of shipping as one of them. Nor is his first-hand knowledge of the sea by any means limited to the Banks.

He has never met Stephen Allen Reynolds—his "Lawrence O'Rourke, Buddhist" is in this number—but some months ago he enclosed some photographs for me to pass on to Mr. Reynolds:

I noticed in "The Camp-Fire" that Mr. Reynolds served two years "before the stick" in the old spouter *Canton*, and believe me, Mr. Hoffman, she was old in every sense of the word, having been built in Baltimore as a merchant clipper 'way back seventy-seven years ago. She was sold into whaling, 1845, and was wrecked on Maio Island, Cape Verde, 1909, after making, I understand, the most money of any of the New Bedford whalers.

I was beach-combing down the Atlantic coast 'long in the Summer of 1909 and happened to hit New Bedford while the *Canton* was in port, along with the *Bertha, Morning Star, Josephine, Daisy,* and a number of other famous old packets, and I secured these two snaps of the *Canton.* I've seen the Dundee whalers (Greenlanders) and also Canadian steam whalers at work, but it takes more nerve than I've got to ship on one, and I have an idea what Mr. Reynolds must have come through aboard the *Canton.*

Of course I may be looking at it from the point of view of a merchant jack, but a sailor would as soon think of going to Hades as shipping on a whaler, and a whaling skipper would sooner ship the devil himself than ship a merchant sailor. "Men for the New Bedford Whalers"—"A great chance to see the world" posters and such-like notices were usually posted up in Vermont villages *as far away from salt water as possible.*

I guess Mr. Reynolds can give you more data than I, and if you care to pass the enclosed snaps on to him, he may like them for the memory of the old packet.

IN CONNECTION with whaling. A fishing skipper made me a present of a section of the vertebræ of a whale which had been brought up from thirty fathoms of water on Grand Bank by the steam trawler *Cambodia.* I brought this odoriferous relic up from the coast in the Pullman a few weeks ago, and the conductor had to hold his nose while passing down the corridor. I have planted it out in the middle of our lawn, and every now and again get a reminiscent whiff of New Bedford. I also had a whale's rib—seven feet long—given me. I have left that for a future journey.

As to his story in this number, Mr. Wallace writes:

The incident regarding the steamer running the schooner down is taken from an accident which occurred to a friend of mine commanding a fisherman. Only it took the whole mains'l, gaff, and boom out of him. Regarding the looting of a wreck. Well, I think this is only natural. I know if I were around one, with the Naval cutter out of the way, I would be tempted to take a turn around aboard with a crowbar. Fisherman have done quite a bit of wreck-looting around our coasts, and I don't blame them, though it is against the law.

GEORGE W. SUTTON, JR., knows his East Africa from personal experience thereof. Here is a word from him on his story in this issue:

In "The Daughter of Ismalji" the girl is, of course, my little friend, Binti Juma (meaning daughter of Juma), that I first met when I was on the top of an electric-light pole. She was an Arab, though for purposes of bringing in the Indian feminine restrictions, or *dasturi,* I have made an Indian (Banyani) of her. There is not very much of a thrilling nature to be said about her except that she was very beautiful and very naïve. Ray Bartlett's house, of course, was my own, and his everyday life as told was mine, but I never possessed a quarter of his virtues and I lack several inches of being six feet.

WE CALL "The Man Who Would not Stay Dead" a "story." And so it is. Fiction. Founded on a mere rumor. But, as its accompanying note explains, the rumor is that world-current one that General Sir Hector MacDonald did *not* commit suicide, that the buried coffin did *not* contain his mortal remains, and that he has been seen at various times under various names in various far corners of the world.

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Charles Neville Buck, the writer of the "story" in question, was the first to pass on to me one rumor concerning the former English general—that he was the General Kuroki who alone of the Jap generals against the Russians was said not to be a Jap and who alone of them, with a magnificent war-record behind him, received no public honors afterward but disappeared from public notice at the end of hostilities.

MR. BUCK himself was never a Japanese general and he has never been dead even temporarily, but he's been around a bit nevertheless:

I have been an art student, a newspaper cartoonist, a law student (admitted to the Kentucky Bar but never practising), a reporter and editorial writer, and in a modest way a traveler.

A part of my childhood was spent in Peru and Chile. My father, Hon. Chas. W. Buck, was U. S. Minister to Peru. We had some adventures, such as a two weeks' quarantine for yellow fever at Callao, which was a pretext, in fact, for keeping my father out of the capital until certain railroad confiscations were carried to completion. It ended when a battleship dropped into the bay.

We saw the three days' fighting through the streets of Lima when Gen. Caceres made himself military dictator, and my father, as dean of the Diplomatic Corps, presided over the meeting at the truce where terms were reached and the Iglecias forces surrendered.

We also had some earthquake excitements, but these were all while I was myself a kid.

I DON'T think I can claim many adventures, though I have just missed a few. While reporting a street-car strike here in Louisville I had to ask a policeman some questions. To do so I had to go into a cleared spot from which the police had driven the strikers after a mounted charge. The cop was excited and took a shot at me with his .45 Colt at about five yards—and missed. However, we have some better cops than that, and he had an excuse. His head had stopped several brickbats, and he was excited. Also he had just seen his corporal's skull fractured, and he was distrustful.

Once, too, I was held up by a couple of Greeks in Piræus Bay after coming to my steamer from Athens about one o'clock in the morning, and had to make a gun-play—which proved successful.

I have seen other fellows have adventures in plenty. I have reported a number of cases arising out of feud conditions in the Kentucky mountains, where one sees some queer phases of life, and have had once or twice to make an unostentatious getaway before the papers containing my reports arrived. Like all Western newspaper men, I have done a variety of work, seen a good deal of the unpleasant, including five hangings, but just as I have never been hanged myself, so the adventures have fallen to others.

My travels have so far been limited. Have been in Europe, Asia, Africa and the two Americas, but haven't touched Australia, and, to tell the truth, Asia and Africa lightly.

One thing, however, ought to admit me to your college of adventurers. I have tried to earn a living in New York, and live to tell of it.

TO MANY of you the following letter to me from Algot Lange, written at Rio de Janeiro, will be of interest. His leaving the Amazon expedition of the University of Pennsylvania seems, from his letter, to have been due to a difference of opinions as to plans:

I am resigning from my connection with the Expedition of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, whose object is to study the indigenous tribes of the Amazon valley. . . . . .

I am leaving in a few days on a coast steamer for Para at the mouth of the Amazon as a Special Agent for the Government. There I will join the inspector of the Department called Protecçao aos Indios (Department of Indian Affairs). Together we will go to Manaos, where a detachment of soldiers will join us, and proceed by launch up the River Madeira to one of its remotest affluents called Gy-Parana.

The purpose of this Government expedition is the pacification of the Parintintin Indians, a wild and hostile and very powerful tribe, who up to the present time have repelled all attempts of domestication or even approach. They are considered by this department the only remaining great tribal body that still remains in absolute savagery in Brazilian territory. They are much dreaded even by the Mundurucu head-hunters.

THE Brazilian Government has purchased a quantity of special flexible mail shirts, in order to invulneralize the men whose work it is to place themselves in friendly communication with the Parintintins, thereby producing a desirable moral effect upon these Indians.

I am officially appointed to make a thorough study and official investigation of this tribe (as well as others afterward), ethnographically as well as sociologically. It is the duty of the members of this Department to see that no strange exploring expeditions, scientific or commercial, invade the territories inhabited by the indigenous tribes. This duty became a law a short time ago.

I hope thus to have in hand some valuable data in a few months. My official headquarters will be in Manaos, while my actual headquarters or basis of operations will be a rubber estate called Calamo, on the Gy-Parana river.

I would appreciate to receive a word from you, and would certainly enjoy the sight of a few copies of my old friend the ADVENTURE to cheer me up in the "Jungles of the Amazon."

Very truly yours,

ALGOT LANGE.

THE Adventurers' Club of Los Angeles held its first monthly dinner a week or two before this writing and has every prospect of quick and strong development. Among the restless-footed men who came

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together for the occasion and are now affiliated with the Adventurers' Clubs of Chicago, New York and Montreal were: C. ap Rhys Pryce, on whose head Porfirio Diaz once put a price, who led an "army" of insurrectos in the Madero rebellion and who has seen service in the Boer War and elsewhere; J. S. Gordon, late of the Northwest Mounted Police; R. S. Button, of South American adventures; Lyne Ransom, world-sailor; Thomas Samson Miller and W. Townend, whose respective experiences in West Africa and on the Seven Seas you are already somewhat familiar with through this magazine; Superintendent Shearer of the city park system; Dr. H. F. True and others. C. O. Bacon, 86 Temple Block, was elected secretary and should receive all applications for membership.

Among the prospective members is Major F. W. Burnham, the American who, among other things, was chief of the British secret service during the Boer War. A friend of our old friend Captain Fritz Duquesne, by the way, for all that they once fought on opposite sides. Captain Duquesne, I might say, added an appendicitis operation to his surgical experiences this Spring. Only two weeks later, at the New York Adventurers' Club dinner, he was fencing with Gordon McCreagh, Kilgore and the Vicomte de Rancougne till we took away his foil to prevent his doing himself an injury!

FRANK R. E. WOODWARD, 5039 Cottage Grove Ave., is now secretary of the Adventurers' Club of Chicago, Captain Foran, though still an enthusiastic member, having been compelled to give all his time to business matters for the time being.

BARTON W. CURRIE'S story in this number deals with the West, where he knocked about for a while. Newspaper work has taken him into a good many odd corners. Here is one of his all-in-the-day's-work adventures.

While I have seen half a dozen people killed and was twice myself more than three-quarters drowned, I never felt a four-speed forty-horse-power case of blue funk until one evening when it looked to me a good deal better than an even chance that I would go down to the dolphins on the Labrador coast.

With a select little band of news-gatherers, I was voyaging from Sydney, Cape Breton, to Battle Harbor, Labrador, to find and interview Peary. Robert Wells Ritchie and yours respectful had borrowed the good ship *Tyrean* from the Canadian Government. The *Tyrean* is a trim steam-driven vessel of about 1500 tons burden that has survived forty years of buffeting on high seas. Ritchie and I had been assigned to go up north and find Peary, and, as we couldn't find anything that would take us out of Sydney Harbor, we called up the Canadian Government and talked it over with Commissioner of Public Works Pugsley, Premier Laurier, and a few other dignitaries. We told them that the *Tyrean* wasn't laying any cables and that her genial skipper would be very glad to take us up into the iceberg-zone if they would only consent. They consented, provided we agreed to let a few other reporters go with us, which we did.

THE weather was halcyon and some plus till we got up into the Straits of Belle Isle; then it turned foul just as we began to get interested in icebergs and tried to photograph to starboard and port and abaft and abeam and astern. Labrador itself is about the bleakest region of the known world, and it looked even bleaker when the skipper told us that we couldn't make Battle Harbor before sundown and that we would have to put into some uncharted pocket in the black walls of cliff to the westward. The sun was going down and the gale was kicking up a nasty mush astern. The skipper looked worried and so did his pilot.

Of course, we might have gone out to sea and waited for better weather, but then we would have missed Peary, and the skipper would have been compelled to report to headquarters that he had failed in the purpose of the voyage. We preferred taking our chances with the black cliffs to missing Peary. There isn't a good newspaperman alive who wouldn't feel the same way about it.

WELL, we made that narrow pocket in the cliff with about eight seconds of daylight to spare. The black pall of night came down on us like a blanket of soot as we shot out of the roaring waters, past a snarling reef of jagged rocks, and entered a slit in the cliffs about ninety feet wide, the vestibule of a great circular pool, the waters of which were as calm and unruffled as death.

Standing on the bridge and listening to the whispers between the Captain and the pilot, and glancing from first one white face to another, I experienced a sort of ecstasy of fear. Had we missed that slit in that Labrador cliff we would have smashed into that wall of eternal limestone and gone down into forty fathoms of ice-water. We all took a chance and we got our story—for me, an interview of 18,000 words, which I filed in one batch at the North Sydney cable-station five days later.

ON PAGE 2 of this issue are the opinions of some of our adventurers on the identification-cards which we are now ready to issue free of charge to our readers, identification being by serial numbers registered with us instead of by name, as explained in the June number. Another opinion or two follows:

YOUR identification-card idea is a bully one. Out in Africa we had to carry a similar card, printed in Dutch and English, in an inner pocket of our tunics. It gave name, regiment, number and birthplace,

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and asked that the enemy kindly communicate with the nearest British post in the event of the bearer of the card being killed or wounded. As a matter of fact we never carried 'em, because we didn't have tunics for the best part of the time. However, in these more civilized days the idea would go well, and it would certainly be a kindness in many cases to furnish a wandering chap with some sort of badge of identity that could go to a sympathetic quarter in case of necessity. L. WARBURTON.

YOUR identification-card idea is a very good one. I am no writer by any means, and purely an adventurer, and recently severed connections with Burns, the detective, after putting in a couple of years that had "something doing" all the time. But a fellow makes a mistake in not having something on him for the purpose of finally acknowledging his proper name. As you say, there surely are times when a man does not want to reveal his true identity.

Owing to some of my experiences while with Burns there are several places in this country where I would be obliged to use up a whole lot of names. Supposing I got in a "jam," though, and the other fellow beat me to a draw—we are not infallible—well, the coroner would have added troubles and some cub-reporter might have my identity mixed with some real live Pittsburgh millionaire. But your tag scheme listens well. R. W. C.

All kinds of material have been suggested—celluloid, cardboard, pegamoid, leather, rawhide, pigskin, parchment, tin, aluminum, etc. All things considered, it seems best to issue the cards in celluloid, or hard cardboard. For unusually rough wear we'll probably issue aluminum belt-tags later on, charging for these last merely enough to cover cost of manufacture.

The cards can probably carry seven languages, leaving a blank space for any other language the bearer cares to add himself. The tags may have room for only four. All whom I've consulted agree that English, French and German are the most important. Next, either Spanish or Portuguese. Then a choice to be made from Russian, Yiddish, Chinese, Arabic, etc. Before me lies a pile of letters from Captain W. Robert Foran, Donald Francis McGrew, A. E. Dingle, Thomas Samson Miller, E. W. Perrott, Stephen Allen Reynolds, and many other real adventurers. Before this reaches your eye the cards will be ready, and, with all the good, practical advice from our comrades of the Camp-Fire, ought to be in the shape best adapted to our needs.

I WISH that some five years from now I could be given magic knowledge of the past for long enough to write the full and actual history of all these identification-cards we are issuing to our readers. Verily the tale would carry into strange places—hidden jungles, burning deserts, under the ground and high above the earth, into the mazes of far cities, through typhoon and hurricane, to the myriad islands of the sea. A great world-covering saga with a thousand heroes, a saga of restless feet and swift hearts, of lure of gold and contest, of struggles with the age-old sea, of flashing deeds and silent courage, of striving and of suffering and death—the fighting, laughing, aching epic of adventure and a world that finds itself thereby.

This card has been to Egypt and the Nile and Abyssinia, to British East and up the Red Sea to hide beneath an Arab burnoose into Persia and the Great Game that Russia plays. This other card has wormed through the underworld of a dozen of our own great cities, carrying justice with handcuffs and a gun. This one came back to us a year ago from Delagoa Bay together with a scrawl in Portuguese telling how its bearer died. The next card is camped upon an unmapped river in Brazil, besieged by fever and the gnawing pains of hunger. This one goes into the cold North, a whip-lash snapping over snarling dogs. This card has just brought word to a small town in Illinois that the missing one is found at last in Honolulu and needs their help. This one has crossed ten seas and, restless, wanders on. This one, "sundowning" in Australia—but there is no end. Behold, they go forth into many places and who can tell the tale?

OF "THE Exaltation of Alkali Pete" Frank Houghton writes as follows:

All the characters are real men who lived and prospected in the neighborhood of Fort Steele in the Rocky and Selkirk Mountains when I, too, was a prospector there about twenty years ago, before the filthy railroads had ruined the country and the real West had passed away. The characters, too, are called by the names I knew them by in the old days. Smiley Jay is dead, killed on Beaver River for a "poke" of gold. Dave Smith is also dead, killed by a boiler explosion. Angel Pool went to Alaska. Ike Foster is in Alberta. Peavine Johnson is dead. And the last time I saw young Mike Quinlivan he was driving a bunch of horses up in Caribou.

YOU already know that Donald Francis McGrew has served in the Philippines and has moved around quite a little between here and Chefu and Nagasaki. The following bears indirectly upon "The Grenadier" in this issue:

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Out of all the places I have been, Mindanao appealed to me most, and my army tales have all been based on that island. Romance and adventure are breathed from every port on her verdured shores, and inland the very atmosphere throbs with the mystery of Moro legends, the essence of all things piratical and romantic.

Mr. McGrew recently moved to New York and now gives all his time to writing. A letter to me a year ago contained the following:

Though I have taken flights into other fields for the sake of adventure and curiosity as to how the other nine-tenths live, I have one splendid trade, that of steam-shovel engineer, to which I have applied myself steadily since marrying, four years ago. It appealed to me from the mechanical view-point as well as for the traveling entailed (not to speak of the salaries one can command), for the trade has many of the alluring qualities of the civil and construction engineer's profession—that is, you are, in nine cases out of ten, in the vanguard of civilization's progress, always out at the front.

So up till a year ago I "dragged" my wife with me everywhere, following the contractors—double-tracking a railroad here, stripping a gold mine there, or up on the Iron Range digging ore, etc., etc. . . . . The steam-shovel is one of the most vital factors in our progress to-day. It made possible railroads that otherwise never would have existed because of the enormous cost of hand-labor; made possible the Panama Canal; irrigated our Western wastes; revolutionized our methods of mining, and has created a world of its own. Through this world, every Spring, from Canal Street, Chicago, to Hibbing, the heart of the Iron Range, and from New York to San Francisco, runs a tremor like to that of dogs in leash. The railroad magnate planning extensions, the contractor figuring on the work, the civil engineer staking the "job," the steam-shovel engineers and crews bothering the Union headquarters about "getting out," the "yeggs" and "boomer-pitmen" and dumpmen embarking for Iowa, for the Iron Range, for Dakota, for everywhere. And each and every contractor is pulsing with that mine of life which becomes more poignant when engendered in a game of chance—a game of chance entailing the pitting of his experience, brains and money against a "proposition" to remove so much dirt or build so much "fill" within a certain time set in his contract. He loses or he gains—and in the effort to gain, if he be the right kind of man, he imparts that galvanic energy to his men, so that they too go at the work as though their lives depended on it, rushing and pushing it through—and then, when it is done, to swing back in the Fall to "Chi," to New York, to Spokane, to "blow in" their "pile" or "stake." It is a live world, an adventurous world, and a real man's world, and I want to bring it out in a big strong story some day. Who knows but that you may be sitting over a girder made of the iron I loaded myself at the Iron Range near the Canada line?

"THE WHITE FLAG," W. Townend's story in this number, has nothing to do with the Mexican border, nor yet with Southsea. But that doesn't make this little incident any the less interesting:

In the Spring, a year ago, when I was in Southern California, I drifted down to the line to see some of the fighting in the ill-starred insurrection in Lower California. A few hours after the Insurrectos reached Tijuana and drove the Federals off, two ranchers and myself managed to cross the line and see the town. In the main street, the only street, wide and sandy, I saw a tall man in khaki leave the post-office and cross to a pile of saddles in front of one of the saloons.

"Aren't you from the old country?" I said.

"Yes," said he. "And so are you, eh? What on earth are you doing here, and where are you from?"

"Southsea," I said, thinking of green grass and blue sea, retired admirals and colonels, and bath-chairs, blue-jackets and battleships.

The tall man in khaki began to laugh.

"Why, so am I!" he said.

And then in a breathless kind of way we told each other our names and discovered that our homes were but a few hundred yards apart—a few hundred *feet*, rather—though 7,000 miles distant from the mountains and sage-brush and Insurrectos.

This was Caryl ap Rhys Pryce, late of the Natal Mounted Police, Imperial Light Horse, and South African Constabulary. Pryce had been elected General of the Insurrectos after "Stanley Williams" had been killed at Mexicali, as related by Kyne in "Red Blood at Mexicali."

I saw quite a lot of Pryce in Tijuana, and a couple of months later when in Los Angeles I went to see him in jail when he was awaiting his trial on the extradition charge put forward by the Mexican Government and a second charge of breaking the U. S. A. neutrality laws.

WHAT do we Americans really know about our army and navy? I'm not talking about stray facts and fancy theories, but *real* facts and conditions. Out of our 90,000,000 people probably not more than half a million at the most have first-hand knowledge of either army or navy—about .00554 of our population.

Consider this quarter of a million who know. How many know both army and navy? How many know either one from more than one point of view? Here is a private who knows the army as a private sees it, but not as an officer sees it, and knows nothing whatever of the navy. Here is an officer with an officer's knowledge, but painfully ignorant of some vital details a private could tell him, nor does he know any more of the navy than does a naval officer about the army. The congressman, the staff-officer, the field-officer, the captain of a battle-ship, the non-com., the seaman and the private, each knows more or less. How many know all? Cavalry, infantry, field and coast artillery, commis-

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sary, transport, hospital and signal corps, balloons and aeroplanes, battle-ships, gunboats, destroyers, submarines, colliers, general strategy and personnel—how many know it *all?* I imagine "there ain't no sech animal."

BUT each one of the half-million knows a little, even if no one of them knows it all. If we could gather from each one what he knows, we would have a mass of real information on the army, navy and marine corps such as has never been gathered on any subject since the world began. It isn't possible to do this. But——

Now, don't laugh when I say this. Think it over first. Has it ever occurred to you that *we of the Camp-Fire are probably better able than any other bunch of people on earth to get at* all *the* real *facts about the American army, navy and marine corps?*

No, I'm not crazy. Think it over. Among us are soldiers and sailors, officers and privates. Men who have served in the army from Ft. Ethan Allen to Manila and Pekin, from the Presidio to Cuba. Sailors and marines who know the navy from submarine to battleship. Americans who have served in the armies and navies, rank and file, of other countries and can make practical comparisons. Natives of foreign countries who entered the American service after their own—some who have fought against us—and who can also make valuable comparisons. Deserters, often with a particularly significant point of view. Men now in active service, and men retired or time expired. *Insurrectos* of various countries, and other "informal" fighters, with their independent opinion of formal methods. Men who have organized or reorganized the entire armies of other nations. Commissioned officers and privates, regulars and volunteers, legislators and executives, and the voters and property-owners who pay for it all and profit or suffer thereby.

Where else will you find a body of men who can give so many kinds of inside information from so many different points of view? Where else get so *comprehensive* a survey?

I HAVEN'T any intention of suggesting a heavily advertised series of articles on the army and navy. I haven't any such articles. Haven't arranged for any. It isn't my idea to make a special noise about the matter in any way. But I've been acquainted with many of you, personally or by letter, for nearly three years now, and I know what I'm saying when I say that among us there is enough inside and real information, if we pool our knowledge, to result eventually in teaching us—and others—a lot of interesting and vital things we didn't know before.

ALSO this. It's always well to know about things. Even if our army and navy mean to you nothing but a national expense, it's well to know about them. The truth always helps. If we uncover weaknesses and abuses, we have done that much toward setting them right. If we find creditable things, we will be adding credit where it is deserved and needed. We won't muck-rake the army and navy. We won't praise them unduly. We merely want the *real facts.*

There are ugly rumors afloat. If they are false, we'll help kill them. There is a kind of patriotism that is wide-spread—the idea that because we're Americans we are beyond criticism and can lick any other nation on earth, no matter what preparations we have or haven't made. If that is ignorance and conceit instead of patriotism, we'll help brand it so.

Incidentally, by bringing out actual facts and conditions we'll be doing a big service to the many among our own number who may now or later consider enlisting in our army and navy. Are they to be encouraged or warned off? At least we should give them the truth.

WHAT I propose to you is merely a general discussion. Quite informal. Open to everybody. All that's required is that each of us be square and just and know what he's talking about. Not limited to Americans. Indeed, some of the most valuable statements and advice might come from our neighbors in Canada, since in some ways their problems are similar to ours. Or may become similar. Which does *not* refer in any way to any idea of "annexation."

We may from time to time have articles bearing on some phase of the subject. I don't know. We'll let the matter shape itself. I imagine the best of it will come out here around the Camp-Fire, from men who don't pretend to be writers.

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THE first question, of course, is whether we need a strong army and navy. Or, for that matter, any at all. Just to start the ball rolling, I'll state my own personal opinion:

Universal peace, if we can get it. But it's plain foolish to disarm unless all other powers do. We need army and navy, as a preventive and a protection.

A half-way army and navy are worse than none. Not strong enough to serve as preventive and protection against the stronger armies and navies of other countries, and therefore a heavy expense serving no real purpose. (Better save the expense by reducing the army to a kind of police or constabulary, and the navy to a revenue service.) Make army and navy strong enough to hold off any comer.

That means, among other things, careful preparation in advance. The day of the minute-man has passed. Modern war is a science, not merely a hurry call for volunteers. We can't win wars just by being Americans. We're more likely to lose them by being Americans and trusting to luck instead of to common-sense preparation.

ARE our army, navy and marine corps as efficient as we like to believe? Generally speaking, do the men hate their officers? How much is there to the rumors that West Point breeds a type of officer who, having had no life-experience outside the army, is not capable of attaining the right relationship with his men? To what extent do men, too devoted to the service to leave it entirely, desert from one regiment to join another whose officers are less objectionable? Is it true that the navy is better than the army in these respects?

An English officer I know maintains that the enlisted men in both our regular army and navy have no real loyalty to the service and less to their officers, enlistment being merely a business matter or a chance for travel and adventure. Says this is our weakest point. He is open to argument, but not to conviction—at least by me. To what extent is his charge justified?

We haven't forgotten how many good Americans died during the Spanish war without even seeing the enemy. Questionable food, unsanitary camps, etc., etc. How about our efficiency at the present time as to commissary, transport and hospital service?

IS IT true that we haven't on hand sufficient ammunition to last our coast and field artillery more than a few rounds in case of a foreign invasion? How about Dewey's supply of ammunition for his fight with the Spanish fleet?

Is our preparation for aerial warfare sadly and dangerously lacking?

Are we building the Panama Canal at colossal expense only to have it easily wrested from us at the first outbreak of a foreign war? Is it unprotected from land attacks? I've heard that a high officer of our navy has stated that if he were ordered to take a fleet of our warships through the Panama Canal in time of war he would resign his command rather than take a risk so foolish. Claimed that the locks in front and behind would be blown up and the whole fleet thus easily put out of commission. Anything in a statement of that kind?

TO what extent does Congress decide army and navy questions in accordance with the real needs and merits of the case instead of in accordance with a number of other things? I don't know, but the other day I read carefully the newspaper account of a Congressional debate over a navy matter. It may have been the correspondent's fault, but in the report of that debate there was much talk from Congressmen about how much or little one of the Southern inland States contributes to the national revenues, how much or little Philadelphia "gets it on" the rest of the country in naval expenditures, whether the "gentlemen from" this or that State was a liar, and other questions of national importance. Much argument as to which Congressional constituency was to profit most by the proposed naval expenditure. But not a single word as to the real merits of the case. What was *needed?* Where was it *needed?* How provide for it most *efficiently?* Apparently these were minor considerations. Indeed, there was nothing to indicate that they were considered at all.

Maybe it was all the newspaper man's fault that the account read as it did. Anyhow it starts me off on a hobby of mine and you've got to let me ride it for just a minute.

SUPPOSE—and it oughtn't to strain your imagination any—that some Congressman *did* cast his vote on some question

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pertaining to the national defense, not according to the real merits of the case, not for the sake of his country's safety and best interests, but for the sake of currying favor at home or somewhere else, or for purely party reasons, or because in some way he saw profit to himself.

How about it? What kind of person is a man who does that?

That's my hobby. To me a miscast vote like that is *treason*, and the man who so miscasts it is a traitor to his country. As between him and Benedict Arnold, I'm for Benedict every time. At least Arnold was a fighter, risked his life on a chance and, comparatively speaking, worked in the open. If I had the power, I'd hang a Congressman like that higher than Haman, or else brand the middle of his forehead with a big "T" and turn him loose among his fellows until he defiled a grave by crawling into it.

Incidentally, when such a public officer has taken an oath of office, he is a perjuror. Having deliberately misapplied the people's money, he is a thief. Having sold himself, he is a prostitute.

Being an easy-going people and slow to anger, and sometimes a bit stupid, we call it "graft," complain a little or grin a lot, and go on about our own personal affairs. As if this miscast vote weren't a personal affair!

Which remarks are not limited to Congressmen nor to army and navy matters. But—Whoa! Stop me! Here's where I get off. I don't often ride a hobby in the "Camp-Fire" and maybe you have hobbies of your own and will be easy on me.

THE American army and navy. What are the *inside* facts? Among us we ought to be pretty well able to get at them. The Camp-Fire would like to hear from all of you who know the army and navy from first-hand experience of them in any capacity. Not an airing of mere personal grievances or enthusiasms, but carefully considered statements that are more or less general in their application.

Let's hear especially from those of you who are not American-born but have served under our colors, particularly if you have also had personal experience in the armies or navies of other countries and can therefore draw comparison.

Do you who have tried it advise other Camp-Fire members to enlist? Are there weak places in our army and navy and their administration? If not, let's do our part toward killing ugly rumors. If yes, what is needed?

THE following letter speaks for itself. The introduction the writer mentions was incidental to the forming of the Adventurers' Club of Los Angeles—an instance of the practical advantages of that order.

Thanks to your kindness in performing the introductions. I have made of Mr. —— a very good friend. We have found a great deal in common to talk about over our pipes, among other things the Adventurers' Club.

Unfortunately I shall be gone before the Los Angeles chapter has the next dinner. However, Mr. —— gave me a copy of the proposed rules and regulations, which are very much the same as those of the New York organization, and when I get to Honolulu I expect to start things in good style.

In the year which has passed since I left the Islands I have rather lost touch with affairs. I would therefore be very glad if you would send me a list of such names as you may have of men there who have spoken of organizing a chapter, in case the active work has not already been done. I hope, perhaps selfishly, that nothing has been done as yet, for I am very enthusiastic about the whole thing, and I should like to feel that even a small part of its success is in a measure due to my activity. Of course, if they have already organized there's an end of that part of it, though there will be many other things to be done to make the Adventurers' Club all that it can be made.

As I am going down on a three-sticker, your letter will probably pass me in mid-ocean and will be waiting for me when I make port. Thus there will be no time lost and I can get to work the same day I land.

I CAN'T remember when I have been so enthusiastic over anything as I am over this club. It is bound to grow and to be a big thing; there are many possibilities. It is a thing which has long been wanted—there is nothing more disheartening than to be alone in a strange country and a strange city day after day. To find friends in all the ports of the world—I tell you, it will be fine. For surely this must spread over the Seven Seas; it is too good a thing to be confined to the States. And it meets with eager welcome wherever it is mentioned. I was at the studio of some young artists in Los Angeles the other night, and there met a chap I had known years ago when we were in the sixth or seventh grade of the grammar-school in a small town near here. He has wandered in every imaginable place since then. I mentioned this Adventurers' Club idea to him in a lull in the talk, and he was delighted with it. As a result, the Los Angeles chapter will have another member in a few weeks, and a member who will work for the good of the order.

. . . . . That is the worst of this sort of life; here I am within a few miles of a chap like —— for a year, and never meet him until I am packing my

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duffle for a trip. But I imagine we shall keep in touch with each other from now on through your courtesy in forwarding letters. You will doubtless know his changes of address: in case his letters and mine are far apart, and I lose track of him, I can write to him in your care, can I not?

You see this Club appeals to me mightily, and when writing of it and kindred things I am apt to let the mill clack and clatter away longer than it should. . . . . Yours sincerely, —— ——

I need not add that members of the club have sent the names of eligibles in Honolulu. And of course any member of the Camp-Fire—which means any reader with the real Spirit of Adventure—is welcome to write to friends in care of this magazine.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

WANTED —MEN *and* ADVENTURES

NOTE.—We offer this corner of the Camp-Fire, free of charge, to such of our readers as may care to avail themselves of it. Naturally we can not vouch for any of the letters, the writers thereof, or any of the claims set forth therein, beyond the fact that we receive and publish these letters in good faith. We reserve the privilege of not publishing any letters or part of a letter. Any inquiry for adventures or adventurers sent to this magazine will be considered as intended for publication, at our discretion, in this department, with all names and addresses given therein printed in full, unless such inquiry contains contrary instructions. in the latter case we reserve the right to substitute for real nāmes any numbers or other names. We are ready to forward mail through this office, but assume no responsibility therefor.

IF AMONG the many adventurers you meet there should be one who can use a man who is a wire and wireless telegraph operator, understands the drill regulations, combat tactics, field-service regulations, first aid and a fair shot, it would indeed be a great favor if you would ask him to

Address No. 45.

AM ONLY an amateur knockabout myself; haven't been concerned in any large exploits at all. Only one or two Mexican fiascos. Have been considerable in the States and some other places, and would surely like to tie on to a good mate with a 33-foot rope and make it hard and fast to the saddle-horn. Also, would like to get on with some outfit doing a little exploring, such as Lange's outfit. Am a pretty fair rider as riders go in this country; can walk my fifty miles a day if it's absolutely necessary. Don't like to do it, though. Say, put me next to this Camp-Fire and the rest of the business. I've been out on the flats so long that I forget to look things up when I get to town. And tell it to me also, if you can, about some bloomin' layout that a live wire can get mixed up with. I'm tired of fooling around in this part of the country, also world, and want to go some place.

Have just a small stake, but that's easy. Enclosed find addressed envelope and my regards to the bunch. Some may know me and consequently you may get my pedigree. It sure has a "Heck" of a sound when reading. Will say *Adios*.

Yours in haste,

J. E. BISHOP, Box 237, Alamogordo, New Mex.

A FRIEND and myself desire to get a party together for a trip into the upper waters of the Findlay River in British Columbia. This is a big-game country, with moose, caribou, deer and bear plentiful. We are both acquainted with the country and can show any one desiring a two or three months' trip some exceptionally good shooting and fishing. We invite correspondence regarding this. The trip should begin about August 1st.

—Address R. H. COOK, care of M. P. Cotton Co.,
Shaughenessy Heights, Vancouver,
British Columbia, Can.

EARLY in July five cruisers, from 26 to 65 foot, housing 23 men and 4 women, will start for a two-years' trip from New York, up the Hudson, through Lake Champlain, the St. Lawrence, Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron, Chicago, Illinois, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, up the Ohio to Pittsburgh, down the Mississippi to New Orleans, skirt Florida, visit the West Indies, Yucatan, Honduras, through Panama Canal and up Pacific Coast to San Francisco in time for the Panama Exposition. Tents carried. Expedition self-sustaining by photos and articles for papers and magazines, making moving-picture films, etc. All members to do picture-acting; complete outfit carried. Community interest; profits divided pro rata. Wanted: 16 or 17 men—newspaper writers, gasoline engineers, navigators, one physician, photographers, carpenters, electricians, all of adventurous spirit and with knowledge of firearms; two women—one stenographer, one article-writer. Each applicant to pay into general fund $500, as a guarantee and to pay for his equipment, food, etc., for entire trip. Expedition in charge of W. D. Emerson, moving-picture producer and director, ex-naval officer. References furnished.

—Address W. D. EMERSON,
301 W. 150th St., New York.

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SERVED through the Madero revolt, and was with Lee Christmas in Honduras; Philippines in '98. Have trotted over quite a bit of this old globe; I have seen many queer things in many queer places. . . . An incident of the Madero revolution: At the battle of Juarez the insurrectos were having quite a time with a Federal entrenchment directly in front of the town, when some one had a bright idea to completely wipe them off the map. A burro was caught and loaded with dynamite, a fuse attached, and the burro started at a good clip for the troublesome trench. Evidently the burro misunderstood instructions, for when he got about half-way to that trench he stopped, looked around a few minutes, turned, let out a bray, and came trotting back. Some of the insurrectos are running yet.

This little tale is true in every detail. I did some of the running myself.

You may publish this letter if you wish; in fact I hope you do. Some one may be looking for a real live man to go a-venturing, and I am ready to go any place, any time, and I don't care how soon, or where.—Address E. A. TALBERT,
General Delivery, Tonopah, Nev.

A COMRADE wants the names and addresses of any firms or individuals engaged in orchid-hunting. I've given him what information I had, but he needs more. Will some of you help him out? Address
R. A. JONES, Washington, Kansas.

SEVERAL years ago, owing to ill health, I decided I would go out in the Rocky Mountains and rough it a while to regain my health. I determined to put in a year or so prospecting, thinking perhaps I might hit it lucky. I ain't much of a writer, but I'll try and give you some idea as to what I found.

At the head of the cañon there was a small hole that went right back into the solid rock. Beneath this hole it appeared to be solid rock, but I found after investigation it was just cemented over, and, after knocking this cement crust off, I struck what appeared to be a tunnel that is all filled up with rocks cemented together like masonry-work. Up on top there are quite a few mounds, also made of cement, and on top of these mounds there were caps.

When I prized off the caps I found underneath them what appeared to be some kind of hieroglyphics cut into the cement on the top of the mounds. There are also lots of what look like some kind of hieroglyphics cut deep into the rocks, it all being solid rock where the mounds are built.

Just across the country from these old mounds I found, leading through the thickets, a well-worn trail and I found it led to the top of a small mountain in a kind of out-of-the-way place. This trail ends at an old shaft that was all filled in with rock, and it was covered over so nicely I never would have seen it, only the rock had settled and there was a slight sink, which I noticed. It's a big shaft and seems to have been filled in quite a long time ago—I should say from the looks of it perhaps over a hundred years ago, but of course I don't know how long it was.

Right in this neighborhood a party told me the Spaniards had a rich mine, and perhaps this is the one I found. I do not know just what it all amounts to, but I don't believe it was all done just for fun.

These things I describe are on Government land and can be located by putting up a mining notice on them. It's not so very far from a railroad station and is easily reached by railroad. I am willing to take anybody out there and show them the lay of the ground, providing they will bear my expenses and agree to give me one-half of anything that might be made out of the venture. I don't know just what the whole thing would amount to. I can only tell you what I saw, and, as I ain't a writer, a man could tell more about it by looking at it than he could find out by my descriptions. Therefore I say, if there is any one that wants to look it over, I am ready to go at any time. If you know of any one that might be interested, would be pleased to hear from them.—Address J. HORAN,
1319 Dart Street, Houston, Tex.

This is a second letter from the same man, giving further details:

Those old mounds I spoke of are made out of a sand cement. This cement is apparently made out of water and sand, but after investigation I find it also contains sulphur and possibly other ingredients. I drilled a hole in one of the mounds and the best I could do with a 3-stick charge of dynamite was to make a small crack in the mound, which will give you some idea as to the strength of the cement.

If some chemist could find out the ingredients of this cement it is possible it might prove a great thing for building purposes. Its power to resist a shock such as dynamite produces ought to make it an ideal material for building purposes in localities like San Francisco where they have earthquakes. Being so cheap to make, it would no doubt appeal to those with small means desiring to build.

I am very sorry I can not give you some idea as to what it would cost to clean out the tunnel, but this I can not do, as I do not know how far the tunnel is cemented up. After cleaning out the cemented rocks in the head of the tunnel, I struck solid rock walls on both sides, and the tunnel still kept on leading up to the old shaft that is also filled in.

I FOUND the trail through the thicket is worn deep into the solid rock, which is pretty positive proof there must have been considerable traffic over this trail, and, as it's worn so deep into rock and is so narrow, I am of the belief it was made by heavily-loaded animals. The shaft also, being so large, leaves me of the impression it must have been made by the Spaniards, as it's just about their size shaft. From all I have ever heard from old-time prospectors I have formed the idea that the Spaniards had their levels about three feet apart, as the Indians packed the ore up on their backs, climbing up notched trees. Therefore I linger under the impression it would not require much to clean this old shaft out, as I figure it is only filled in as far as the first level.

After going over the ground carefully I am of the belief that this old shaft is a well-developed mine and all the indications there would give any one looking at it the same idea. While I can not tell what either it or the old tunnel might pan out to be worth, yet I believe it might pay some one with

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the necessary funds to handle such a proposition to investigate.

PUT me down as one "in search of a job." My qualifications are youth, health, good mind, fair shooting ability, but absolutely no experience in search of adventure. However, I can rough it with the rest of them, as I have roughed it many a time. I suppose no one would want me, though, as I am married. My wife, however, would offer no objections to anything that may turn up.

Address No. 41.

I AM open for anything from a free-for-all fight to a South American Revolution. I was born and raised in Wyoming and was a cowboy for several years. I have knocked around the world and have been in Hawaiian and Fijian Islands, Australia and New Zealand, Argentine, Chile and Bolivia, and three or four Continental countries, as well as the United States and Canada. I speak French and Spanish, and anything where there was something doing in the adventure line would suit me to a T. Address No. 48.

ADVENTURE of any kind has always appealed to me, but I received very little encouragement from the folks at home (Liverpool, England). The army and navy didn't appear to give much chance of adventure. You may get in action and may not, so I joined the volunteers and learned how to handle a gun. At eighteen I went to sea and kept going for about three years. Was on the Cunarder *Slavonia* when she went ashore at Flores in the Azores (and stayed there). There wasn't much excitement. A quartermaster fell overboard when we were dropping the boats and a steerage passenger jumped over the side and we fished them out. I got as far as Iquitos, Ecuador, on a Booth boat one time and have been regretting ever since that I didn't stay there.

Three years ago I left the ship in New York and went to Boston, where I had a pal. Got there with 5 cents and had a job to start in before I had dinner. Stayed there three months and came back to New York, landed with 65 cents, and went on short rations for a while. Since I have worked every kind of job. From motorman to digging trenches and demonstrating machines. Spent the Summer in Atlantic City, N. J., and got back with $2.50. Stayed at Mills Hotel until I got a job. Now I've told you all this to convince you that I've tried in vain to get some adventure out of this life without much success, so if you could put a job in my way where there's likely to be any fun and a little profit, why, I'm your man. I have in mind to get a ship to any place in South America and get out there, but to go with a couple of other fellows would suit me better. Address No. 40.

I HAVE *definite* and *positive* information of some very rich mineral deposits in a certain part of South America and would like to enlist the services of two or three men who would be willing to take some desperate chances with the possibility of coming back well-fixed or not at all. The only reason why I ask for help on this thing is simply that I haven't the price to get started. If I had it I would not ask odds of any one, but would go after the stuff myself.

If there are none who are willing to go with me on this trip, perhaps there may be some one among your numerous readers who could use my services. I am willing to go any place at any time, providing there is a chance for some excitement and incidently some gain. I am twenty-two years old, understand autos, motor-boats and gasoline machinery in general, mechanical drafting, and am handy with almost all tools and machinery. Also, I can handle a rifle or revolver with the best of them. If there is any one who has use for any of those qualifications, the sooner I hear from him the better I'll like it.

Address No. 50.

I WOULD like it if you would put me in touch with some person who is going out for a little "fun." It does not matter where or why.

Address No. 46.

I'VE been looking for adventure for nearly four years; lumber-packing it in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula; have followed the wheat harvests of Minn., the Dakotas and Canada; have herded sheep in Wyoming. Worked on a cattle-ranch in Humboldt Co., Cal. Then the construction camps, the Los Angeles Aqueduct and the Big Creek project of the Pacific Light and Power Co. I've held a number of different jobs in the camps: laborer, signal-man, pipe-fitter, time-keeper, four-horse "skinner," tunnel-mucker, chuck-tender, and at present running a compressed-air drill in a tunnel. Quite a variety, you see, but no adventure. I am still hopeful, however. You can put me down as a young man 24 years old, height 6 ft., weight 165, a fair rifle-shot, and looking for adventure anywhere, any time. CECIL E. WRIGHT, Amo, Ind.

I AM a floor mechanic by trade. Have had experience with gas and steam engines, marine and stationary, and served some time in the locomotive shops of the Katy R. R. at Parsons, Kan. Am anxious to enter into any adventures where my services would be of any use and am ready to jump at anything at the first tap of the bell. Am of Irish descent, red-headed, 21, and strong, and have a common-school education.—Address,

K. T. FOSTER, R. F. D. No. 6,
Oklahoma City, Okla.

HAVING felt for the past couple of years that "at the other side the world I am overdue," I place myself unreservedly at the disposal of any adventurous undertaking which may come to your notice. I may add that, in addition to an intensely restless disposition which makes work-a-day existence impossible, my whole life has been passed in such environment as the majority of your correspondents describe and which hitherto I took as all in the day's work and not at all in the light of adventure.

Unfortunately, my most interesting experiences, embracing Russia and Finland, I have the best of reasons for keeping to myself, but there have been such minor affairs as the Boer War from the Boer standpoint and afterward "tramping it" from Lourenço Marques to Pretoria, having concluded such exercise to be much more healthful than the entertainment the Portuguese authorities sought to press upon me touching a matter of various and

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sundry cases of wine which somehow happened to escape the attention of the customs officers.

If there is anything on the tapis—lead me to it! North, South, East or West, beneath the earth or up in the air—the latter preferred.

I am thirty-two; sound of wind and limb; speak a number of languages; able to operate a moving-picture camera, a wireless, or an automobile with equal facility, and am willing to fill in any old way. What offers?—Address,

ALLEN M. EVERTZ, care ADVENTURE.

I WAS honorably discharged from the U. S. Navy as Gunner's Mate 3rd Class in January and I think my next stop will be Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, where my brother is at present. . . . You might put me on your list for any job with a little life in it anywhere, should you get in touch with a person needing a fellow like myself.

Address No. 42.

THIS looks to me lie a unique idea. Man who will go into almost any remote corner of the globe and take a special photograph of any spot that may hold particular interest for you:

THE writer, an adventurer of whom you have possibly never heard, begs to introduce himself as ardent admirer of Camp-Fire chats. In it I find many characters and places which, although I have possibly never seen, I feel that I know, and fond recollections are ofttimes recalled by this section of your magazine.

Your idea of an identification-card is great, and I will be sure to get one as soon as they are out.

Usually I go by the name of —— ——— (which name I would prefer to remain out of print), and it is just possible that you have heard that name. Now my line of adventure is possibly a little different than most of those I have read about in ADVENTURE. In the first place I graduated from a prominent school of criminology and practised for two years, then took up business executive, expecting to settle down. However, that was not to be, and I took up promoting a gasoline-engine company. Later went with the Pennsylvania Railroad and from there to my present position, where I have taken charge of the firm whose letter-head I use, for the purpose of setting it on its feet. During my term as a detective I went through Canada to Hudson's Bay, down the St. Lawrence to New York, where you will find me registered as a member of the 57th St. Y. M. C. A., and supposed to be traveling for a brick concern of your city. I covered nearly all of New England, then went to Buffalo, Cleveland and back to my home town, which is ———.

I expect to complete my work with this concern about August 1st, and after a month's rest will start on a photographic trip around the world. I have an excellent camera and my own developing apparatus—daylight, of course—and will only carry this, sufficient clothes and a S. & W. .38 with possibly my Savage .303. I expect to be in every country in the world, and will consume from one year to two as matters pan out while on the road.

Should any of your readers have a dear old spot which they want photographed in any country and in any place, or a place where they have had some exciting times, and will write me just where to find this place, I will be pleased to go there for them if at all possible for me to do so, take a photograph and return it on the first mail to them. If parties interested in this trip will write me prior to August 1st, I will be glad to correspond with them and will arrange my trip so as to get in all the photographs for your readers that I can.—Address No. 47.

THIRTY-FOUR, clean-cut, well-bred, athletic. In Cuba, Porto Rico, "on my own," 1899. In progression, clerk, bookkeeper, chief clerk in large banking institution, N. Y. City; rider with Wild West Show, one season, quit as assistant manager. Again bank clerk, reporter, junior accountant, public accountant, auditor. During this period by digression and for recreation, settlement worker, teacher, organizer and director of men's clubs, boys' clubs, trade schools, etc. No army experience; reason height 5 feet 4 inches, weight (in training) 123 pounds. Drilled volunteer organizations, foot and mounted. Can take a company from "fall in" through the latest tactics in attack over open ground. Good shot. Able disciplinarian, excellent systematizer. Want office with constabulary or large ranch or plantation, in climate where I could bring my mother. Address No. 49.

I AM young, healthy and strong, willing to go anywhere and do anything that's honest.

Address No. 52.

MY PARTNER and I are open for anything that promises adventure and a fighting chance to make good and come through. We have both rambled some, but have had no real adventures. Can leave any time. Address No. 51

CAN any one of your Camp-Fire members give me any information about the art of rope-spinning? I can't keep the rope from twisting up at the loop, so if any Camp-Fire member could tell me how it is done, what kind of rope, etc., I would be greatly pleased. JOSEPH M. ELROY, 332 Bloor West, Bank of Nova Scotia, Toronto, Ont., Canada.

TWO young men, twenty-one years of age, looking for a good job with some prospecting outfit or treasure-seekers in warm climate. One, being myself, is fair stenographer, brought up in saddle, but have not been in one for three or four years; handy with motors or machinery; also fair shot with rifle. Other sailed five years, two years fireman (marine); has just returned from the South where he had a few trivial "adventures." Address T. K. D., 386 West Elizabeth Street, Detroit, Mich.

AGE thirty-three; good all-round man; expert rifleman, pistol-shot; good boat and canoe man; first-class swordsman (have been instructor). Have been in Australia two years; South Africa three years in Mounted Infantry; over most of Europe. Punched cows, herded sheep, and prospected in the mountains. Have for several years done guard work for one of our biggest detective agencies. Enough said. At present idle. Will go anywhere there is chance of adventure and *gold*, either coin or *otherwise*. Will pay own fare to any port of U. S., to go with *genuine* outfit. FRANCIS WYNNE JAMES, Box 375, Sheridan, Wyoming.

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE.—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with any old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name if possible. All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right, in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor.

WILL Jack Prout, who was in Porcupine Camp in 1908, communicate with R. W. Coates, care of ADVENTURE.

WILL Fred Scott, a newspaper man in the Fall of 1911 in Pensylvania, last heard of in New Orleans, communicate with R. W. Coates, care of ADVENTURE.

WILL Robert Scott Frazer, New York City, be kind enough to communicate with Talbot Mundy or Editor of ADVENTURE

WM. F. MOLLENHAUER, JR., would like to communicate with Gordon Law.

Would also like to get in touch with Simon P. Culp, The Modern Munchhausen. Address Wm. F. Mollenhauer, Jr., General Delivery, Owatonna, Minn.

WILL Charles Goolrick, who was discharged from the U. S. N. Hospital Corps at Norfolk in the Winter of 1902-3, advise an old shipmate of his address? Address Box 511, Johnstown, Pa.

NOT for newspaper notoriety, but that some of my old comrades may know of my whereabouts, would I ask to be admitted to your Camp-Fire; for the trouble with my eyes, which I mentioned to you in one of my letters, has become more serious, and to-day I find myself half blind, compelled to bid adieu to the roving life and only in memory live again through the wild scenes of my past life. There are no doubt some of my old shipmates and companions-in-arms who might drop me a line, should they hear of me through the Camp-Fire. F. E. VAN LEUE. Hornell, N. Y.

JACK BONHAM, born at Hastings, England; enlisted about 1900 (aged fifteen) and served six years in band of the Royal Sussex; to Sherbrooke, P. Q., Canada, with two other young men, sailing from London, March, 1906; last heard from Aug., 1906, with photo in uniform of Sherbrooke Volunteers; natural musician; favorite with his comrades. Any one having word of him please communicate at once with Mrs. Jean Bonham, care ADVENTURE.

I'D LIKE to hear from, or to know what has become of, these men who were in "E" and "C" Troops, B. S. A. P., stationed in and around Salisbury, at Hartley Hills and New Fort Martin, Rhodesia, South Africa, in 1896-1897: A. S. O'Connor, Bob Ross, Jimmie Van Damme, Anton Kufeke, Jack Griffiths, Julian Harries, Jack Gardiner. Address W. E. Prickett, care ADVENTURE.

"ELLIOT, 1st Sergeant." Kindly give me full name and address. Editor, ADVENTURE.

WILL Edward J. Raeder, last heard of in Manila, P. I., communicate with Donald F. McGrew, care ADVENTURE.

IF ANY one knows where Trafford Eckley Smith is, for the love of Mike send word to the Australian he was down the Mediterranean with in 1899. Address Australian, care ADVENTURE.

DICK MARTEL, who was in Hermosilla in 1887, write Wm. E. Saunders, Torresdale, Phila., Pa.

CHARLIE SCHAEFFER, who was in Sonora in 1887, write Wm. E. Saunders, Torresdale, Phila., Pa.

WHERE is Kenneth, or "Kid," MacNicoll, last heard of in Carmel, California, and Arizona? Address Tom Graham, care ADVENTURE.

WORD wanted of George Dean, of Massachusetts, who sailed on the whaling-bark *Canton* to Hudson's Bay in 1893. Address Stephen A. Reynolds, care ADVENTURE.

WISH to get into communication with Charlie Sutherland, late of Bechuanaland Police, Jameson Raid, Boer War, in charge Union Castle Line Dock at Cape Town. Address Talbot Mundy, care ADVENTURE.

WISH to get in touch with —— Cresson, who was in Persia in 1902, quarantined at Moses' Wells, and started home to America on the *Egypt*. Address Talbot Mundy, care ADVENTURE.

Manuscripts sent us by the following are being held by us, having been returned to us as unclaimed at the addresses furnished:

Julia A. Sill, New York; Horatio Langford King, Galveston, Texas; J. K. Livingston (no address); W. Lynch, Trenton, N. J.; W. Mack, Pachica, Mexico; Henry W. Edwards, New York; Daniel Morgan, Pine Bluff, Arkansas; W. G. Gormley, Ontario, Canada; George Stillions, Chicago, Ill.; Francis Manson, Chicago, Cal.

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